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Complete Chronicles



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MYST URU *Complete Chronicles*

PRIMA OFFICIAL GAME GUIDE

Bryan Stratton



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Explorer's Reference

Publisher's Note

In exchange for allowing us to reprint DRC research journals found by the author during his journey, the DRC was given access to the journals of the author. We offer this bullet-point explorer's reference as a document of future historical importance and as a reference to any amateur explorers who wish to retrace the author's steps.

While this explorer's reference will get you from the start of Yeesha's journey to the end of it, it is intended to do so as quickly as possible. That means that it does not mention optional detours or areas of interest—such as Yeesha Pages, non-essential Linking Stones, or DRC journals found along the way. Refer to the author's narrative in the previous chapters for a more detailed view of the journey.

Cleft

Outside the Cleft

- Touch Journey Cloth #1 on the back of the "No Trespassing" sign.
- Touch Journey Cloth #2 on the back of Zandi's trailer.
- Touch Journey Cloth #3 on the inside of the Wahrk skeleton.
- Enter the Cleft via the ladder.

Cross the Cleft

- Walk across the bridge that leads to the unlocked door; bridge snaps.
- Climb the bridge "ladder" to a sleeping chamber.
- Touch Journey Cloth #4 on the wall of the sleeping chamber.
- Cross the plank bridge to the other side of the Cleft.
- Climb up the bridge "ladder" to the laboratory's open door.



Power the Cleft and View Imager

- Release the windmill brake in the kitchen.
- Return to the surface and push the handle on the windmill to start it turning.
- Return to the laboratory and enter the symbols near the door into the Imager.
- Activate the Imager and listen to Yeesha's speech.
- Touch Journey Cloth #5, revealed by Yeesha, in the laboratory.

Touch Remaining Journey Cloths

- Close the laboratory door.
- Exit through the kitchen door and cross the bridge beyond it.
- Touch Journey Cloth #6, hanging on the outside of the laboratory door.
- Step on the foot pedal in front of the bucket winch to lower the bucket.
- Touch Journey Cloth #7 on the side of the lowered bucket.

Open Bahro Door and Link to Relto

- After finding all seven Journey Cloths, touch the Bahro Door at the base of the tree in the Cleft to open it.
- Descend the ladder and follow the pathway to a Linking Book.
- Use the Book to link to Relto.

Teledahn

Link to Teledahn from Relto

- Standing with your back to the Relto hut, touch the hand icon on the near-right pedestal to reveal the Teledahn Linking Book.
- Touch the Linking Panel to link to Teledahn.
- Upon appearing in the hut in Teledahn, walk around the exterior of the hut to find and touch Journey Cloth #1.

Restore Power

- Exit the hut and follow the pathway to the power tower, bearing left at the only fork in the path.
- Pump the priming switch three times to raise the tower.
- Line up the sun in the center of the viewfinder and set the viewfinder rotating counterclockwise so that the sun remains in the center of it; power is restored.
- Pull all three levers near the power tower. Two activate giant camshafts; the third is broken.

Bucket Ride to Control Room

- Pull lever next to bucket loader to start the countdown.
- Quickly jump into the bucket to ride to the control room.
- If you miss the bucket, pull the lever again to stop the buckets and start over.



Control Room

- Touch Journey Cloth #2 hanging on the wall of the control room.
- Use the control panel to drain the water below the hut and unlock the hatch in the hut where you started.
- Step on the foot brake in front of the elevator to release it.
- Press the blue button in the elevator to ride up to the Teledahn office.

Teledahn Office

- Touch Journey Cloth #3 on the office wall.
- Make a note of the pressure plate diagram on the desk.
- Review other materials as you see fit (optional).
- Return to the elevator and press the green button twice to return to the hut where you started.



Slave Caverns

- Open the hatch in the hut's floor and climb down the ladders into the storm drain.
- Exit the storm drain through a crack in its side to reach the slave caverns.
- Touch Journey Cloth #4 on the wall of the slave caverns.
- Move rocks or large bones onto the four pressure plates closest to the two locked gates to open the gates.
- Proceed into the next chamber; flip any of the switches on the wall to close the gate you just came through and open the exit gate.

Outside Slave Caverns

- Walk down the pathway past the slave caverns until you reach a raised section of the path.
- Jump directly at the raised pathway to loosen it, then pull the lever in front of it to lower it.
- Continue along the path to a plateau.
- Jump up the crates near the door to reach a ledge containing Journey Cloth #5; touch the Journey Cloth.
- Enter the door near the crates.

Mining Gun

- Proceed along the metal pathway through a door and into a cavern.
- Touch Journey Cloth #6 on the cavern's wall.
- Proceed down the tunnel and subsequent pathway next to Journey Cloth #6 to find a mining gun.
- Use the mining gun to shatter hanging boulders in the distances; one of them is the counterweight for a hanging ladder near Journey Cloth #5.

Climbing the Ladder

- Return to the ledge where you found Journey Cloth #5.
- Climb the ladder you just lowered to reach a room with Journey Cloth #7 in it.
- Descend the stairs to reach a secret door leading back to the room downstairs.
- From that room, proceed up the metal pathway and into the cavern beyond it to find the Bahro Door near Journey Cloth #6.

Bahro Cave

- After finding and touching all seven Journey Cloths, touch the Bahro Door to open it.
- Proceed through it to link to the Bahro Cave.
- Touch the hand icon on the wall to remove the Bahro Pillar to Relto.
- Drop into the starry void below the cave to link back to Relto.

Gahreesen

Link to Gahreesen

- Standing with your back to the Relto hut, touch the hand icon on the far-left pedestal to reveal the Linking Book to Gahreesen.
- Use the Book to link into Gahreesen.

Retrieve Your KI

- From the link-in point, follow the path to the KI Dispenser.
- Activate the KI Dispenser to get your KI.

To the Second Floor

- Proceed past the safety cones into the next room.
- Leap the gap in the floor and look for Journey Cloth #1 in the rubble beyond it.
- Enter the beetle cages through the crack in the wall.
- Climb up on one set of cages to reach Journey Cloth #2.
- Climb up the other set of cages and jump up the rubble to reach the second floor.

To the Gear Room

- Walk into the "rotating" wall through the crack in the hall wall.
- Walk into the Gear Room from the "rotating" wall through another crack in the wall.
- Touch Journey Cloth #3 on the wall of the Gear Room.

Restoring the Power

- Stand on the primer pump pressure plate until the pump is at full pressure.
- Run to the leftmost switch on the bank of switches and activate it; return to the pressure plate before the pump loses its pressure.
- Repressurize the pump, then step on the far foot switch next to the giant gear. Return to the primer pump to repressurize it.
- Step on the near foot switch next to the giant gear. Return to the primer pump to repressurize it.
- Run to the second switch from the left (marked with a gear icon) and activate it to restore power to the gear.
- Flip the two remaining unlit switches to restore power to the elevator and doors.



To the Roof

- Return to the first floor via the same route you use to reach the second floor.
- Ride the elevator in the first floor hallway (across from the KI Dispenser) to reach the roof.

Training Facility

- Jump from the extended walkway on the roof to the highest pinnacle between the two rotating buildings.
- Touch Journey Cloth #4, hanging on the side of this pinnacle.
- Jump from the pinnacle to any of the six pathways extending from the Training Facility.
- Run to the pathway's end to enter the Training Facility.
- Head to the Conference Room in the Training Center that has Journey Cloth #5 hanging on the wall.

Gahreesen Prison

- Link back to Relto, then link to Teledahn.
- Use the Linking Stone in the room near the Bahro Door to link into a Gahreesen prison cell.
- Touch Journey Cloth #6 on the wall of the cell.
- Drop through the hatch in the cell to reach the hallways below.
- Walk away from the barred window overlooking the outside of the prison.
- At the first four-way intersection, turn right.
- At the next four-way intersection, go straight.
- At the third four-way intersection, turn left and climb the ladder at the hall's end.
- Enter the door at the ladder's top to enter the training room.
- Climb either ladder extending through the ceiling of the training room.
- Find Journey Cloth #7 on one of the outer support pillars at the top of the ladders.
- Link back to Relto, and then link back to Gahreesen.

Bahro Cave

- Return to the pinnacle between the two rotating buildings.
- Jump to the nearby pinnacle that isn't quite as tall.
- From there, leap to the ledge with the Bahro Door on it.
- After finding and activating all seven Journey Cloths, touch the Bahro Door and proceed through it to link to the Bahro Cave.
- Touch the hand icon on the wall to remove the Bahro Pillar to Relto.
- Drop into the starry void to link back to Relto.

Kadish Tolesa

Link to Kadish Tolesa

- With your back to the Relto hut, touch the hand icon on the far-right pedestal to reveal the Kadish Tolesa Linking Book.

Kadish Tolesa Gallery

- From the link-in point, face the giant tree behind you and follow the left-hand path to a ruined courtyard.
- Follow the edge of the courtyard in a clockwise direction to reach Journey Cloth #1.
- Use the Linking Book in the gazebo in the middle of the courtyard to link to the Kadish Tolesa Gallery.
- All five of the major artworks near the Linking Book in the Gallery are clues to the puzzles you must solve; make a note of them.
- Use the Linking Book in the Gallery to return to the gazebo from which you linked.

Ring Pattern Alignment

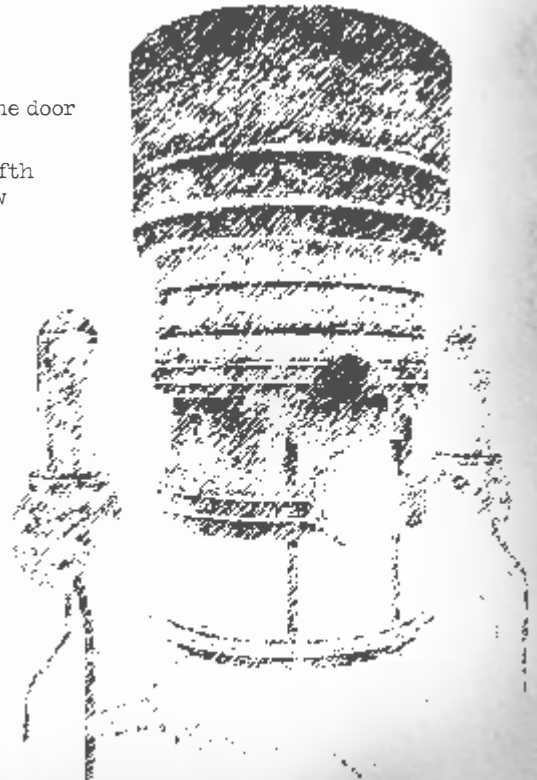
- Look through the alignment device near the Gallery Linking Book.
- Align the three rings with the alignment device so that they match the top image in the Gallery triptych.
- Return to your link-in point and take the right-hand path, making a left at the only intersection in the path.
- Find Journey Cloth #2 on the side of the raised platform that holds the second alignment device.
- Use the second alignment device to align the next set of rings so that they match the middle image in the Gallery triptych.
- Walk down the pedestal stairs and continue walking in a straight line to reach the third alignment device.
- Use the third alignment device to align the final set of rings so that they match the bottom image in the Gallery triptych.
- This opens a door in a nearby tree. Proceed through the door.

Shadow Path

- On the other side of the door is a blue switch. Press it to close the door and reveal Journey Cloth #3.
- Walk down the spiral staircases. Press the second, third, and fifth glowing blue switches, which casts a pattern of light and shadow on the floor.
- Walk along the shadow path to the room's center to reveal a hidden passage. Go through the door at the end.

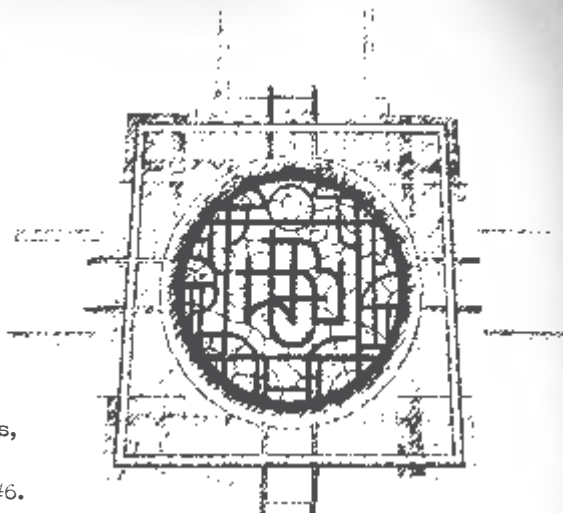
Glowing Symbol Path

- Follow the path to reach a vista and a ziggurat.
- Find Journey Cloth #4 in an exterior alcove of the ziggurat.
- Enter the ziggurat and press the glowing blue switch to shine light onto the floor.
- Press the switch again after a minute to shut off the light. The floor now glows with blue symbols.
- Walk on only the tiles that show a variation of the Kadish Tolesa tree symbol as seen in the Gallery.
- When you reach the last tile, it becomes an elevator and descends through the floor.



Pillars

- Touch Journey Cloth #5 in the hall that leads to the pillars.
- The leftmost lever in the pillar room controls the nearest pillar, the rightmost lever in the pillar room controls the farthest pillar, etc.
- Raise the second pillar once, the third pillar three times, and the fourth pillar four times.
- Climb the pillars to reach an alcove with Journey Cloth #6.
- Descend the alcove stairs to return to the levers. Press the blue button to reset the pillars.
- Raise the first pillar once, the second pillar four times, the third pillar once, and the fourth pillar twice to drop a ladder from the ceiling.
- Climb up the second pillar to reach the ladder. Climb the ladder.



Vault

- Follow the pathway to the control panel for the vault.
- Press the buttons in this order: 1-5-2-3-4-6.
- Enter the vault and jump up the piles of treasure opposite the door to reach Journey Cloth #7.

Bahro Cave

- Return to the vault control panel and drop onto the huge guy wire that stretches over the Bahro Door ledge.
- Leap from the guy wire to the ledge, and touch the Bahro Door to open it (assuming you have touched all seven Journey Cloths).
- Go through the Bahro Door to link to the Bahro Cave.
- Touch the hand icon to remove the Bahro Pillar to Relto.
- Drop into the starry abyss to return to Relto.

Eder Gira and Eder Kemo

Link to Upper Gira

- With your back to the Relto hut, touch the hand icon on the near left pedestal to reveal the Eder Gira Linking Book.
- Use the Book to link to Upper Gira.

Upper Gira

- Drop onto the small ledge that overlooks the lava river to reach Journey Cloth #1.
- Run from that ledge onto the pinnacle in the lava river's center, and step on the fumarole foot switch to close the fumarole.
- Leap from that pinnacle to the nearby plateau; if you miss, you will "panic-link" to Relto, so don't worry.

- Close the two fumaroles on that plateau.
- Cross the land bridge and close the fumarole at the end.
- There is a ledge above one of the two open fumaroles. Close the fumarole that is not directly below the ledge.
- Stand on the fumarole beneath the ledge to shoot up to the ledge and touch Journey Cloth #2.
- Drop off that ledge and go to the other side of Upper Gira. Open the fumarole directly in front of a short rock wall.
- Return to the other open fumarole and close it.
- Return to the open fumarole and stand on it to shoot over the rock wall.
- Follow the path to Lower Gira.

Lower Gira, Part 1

- Jump into the cavern beyond the twin waterfalls.
- Turn on both torches in the cavern.
- Push the hexagonal basket out of the cavern and into the water.
- Maneuver the hexagonal basket so that it rests squarely in the narrow brook between the cavern and the shrine with the Linking Book in it.
- Use the Linking Book in the shrine to link to Eder Kemo.

Eder Kemo

- Touch Journey Cloth #3, which is hanging on the back side of the largest stone pillar in the courtyard rock garden.
- Touch Journey Cloth #4, which is hanging on a rock wall in the bamboo grove.
- Touch Journey Cloth #5, which is hanging on a lamppost that overlooks a stone rest area near the "brain trees."
- Touch Journey Cloth #6, which is hanging on a rock wall in the puffer grove.
- Wait for the rain to start and stop, then walk through the cloud of glow bugs near the brain trees to attract them. Running, jumping, or exposing the bugs to water will cause them to flee.
- Walk down the path, past the puffer grove, until you reach a Linking Book; use it to link back to Lower Gira.

Lower Gira, Part 2

- Walk around the steam vent directly in front of you, and walk over the basket you placed in the stream.
- Jump into the cavern behind the waterfall without landing in the water; you will lose only half of your glow bugs.
- Walk through the dark tunnel in the cavern.
- Light the torch at the cavern's end.
- Open the wooden door in the cavern to reveal another tunnel.
- Go through this tunnel until you reach the top of the twin waterfalls.
- Walk through the water to find another cavern with two more hexagonal baskets (you will lose your glow bugs).
- Push both hexagonal baskets off of the top of the waterfalls so that they land in front of the lower cavern.
- Return to the lower cavern and push the two baskets into position between the cavern entrance and the shore so that you can enter the cavern without jumping or walking through water.
- Return to Eder Kemo and get more glow bugs, then link back to Eder Gira.



- Walk across all three hexagonal baskets and into the cavern behind the waterfalls; you shouldn't lose any glow bugs.
- Proceed through the darkened tunnel and turn left at the end to ascend another darkened tunnel that ends in a narrow outdoor ledge.
- Walk along the ledge and jump the gap; you will lose half of your glow bugs.
- Continue to the end of the ledge and enter the cavern.
- Turn on the torch in the cavern.
- Touch Journey Cloth #7, which hangs on the wall of the cavern.
- Return to the Linking Book shrine and link to Eder Kemo.

Bahro Cave

- Follow the Eder Kemo path to the Bahro Door.
- After activating all seven Journey Cloths, touch the Bahro Door to open it.
- Proceed through the door to link to the Bahro Cave.
- Touch the hand icon on the wall to remove the final Bahro Pillar to Relto.
- Drop into the starry void to link back to Relto.

End of the Journey

Returning the Pillars

- Revisit each Age (Teledahn, Gahreesen, Kadish Tolesa, and Eder Kemo) and reenter each Bahro Cave through the Age's Bahro Door.
- Touch the hand icon to return the Age's Bahro Pillar to the Bahro Cave.
- When you return all four Bahro Pillars, make a note of the four symbols on the floor of the Bahro Cave and their position relative to each other.
- Link back to Relto, where the star fissure opens between the pedestals.

Meeting Yeesha

- Drop through the star fissure to link back to the Cleft.
- Return to the laboratory and input the Bahro Cave symbols into the Imager; activate the Imager.
- Yeesha appears with gifts and a Linking Book to Tomahna.
- Use the Linking Book to link to Tomahna.
- Exit the Tomahna Cleft to see the Bahro enter the volcano—end of journey.



NOTE

The following information is provided for research purposes only! DRC researchers are expressly forbidden from moving the Bahro Pillars from Relto back to the Bahro Cave until we understand more completely the effects and consequences of doing so!

PART TWO: TO D'NI

MYST[®]

URU[™]

EXPANSION PACK

TO D'NI[™]



Down to D'ni

Beyond Uru

In the fall of 2003, I embarked upon a journey that would change my life. I was assigned the task of meeting Dr. Richard A. Watson of the D'ni Restoration Council (DRC), traveling with him to the ancient underground city of the D'ni people, and writing an account of my voyage. Initially, I thought I was being played for a fool. How could a 10,000-year-old city exist underneath the southwestern United States without anyone being aware of it? But apparently Dr. Watson was a very persuasive fellow, because he managed to convince my editor that this city—this *uru* as he called it—was worth sending me to New Mexico to check out. I'm sure it didn't hurt that D'ni was supposed to have been a source of inspiration for the best-selling *Myst* series of games, which had turned a very tidy profit despite having been widely regarded as fiction.

I arrived at the desert Cleft in New Mexico that resembled the one spoken of in the *Myst* series of novels. It was here that Atrus, the principal figure of the *Myst* stories and games, was said to have been raised by his grandmother, Anna.

Dr. Watson was nowhere to be seen, but a man by the name of Jeff Zandi encouraged me to explore the area. At first, I thought the Cleft was the product of a particularly fanatic group of *Myst* enthusiasts. However, it wasn't long before I started to discover objects that couldn't be explained away as easily. Among these were a series of burlap cloths emblazoned with handprints that glowed when touched.

As my journey continued, I found a recording left by Atrus' daughter, Yeesha, which said that these "Journey Cloths" represented the lost history of a race called the *bahro* (D'ni for "the least"), who allegedly had been exploited by the D'ni.

My exploration led me to an actual Linking Book, a device seen in the *Myst* games that allowed the user to transport to another place (or "Age") across time and space. I placed my hand on the Linking Panel and felt myself pulled into an Age I would come to know as my Relto, a personal Age created by Yeesha. From my Relto, I would travel to the Ages of Gahreesen, Teledahn, Kadish Tolesa, Eder Kemo, and Eder Gira and follow the journey of the *bahro*. What Yeesha didn't tell me was that, over the course of my journey, I was actually freeing the *bahro* from an ancient imprisonment and returning them to D'ni.

At the end of my journey, I left the Cleft and returned to civilization in a daze from the impossible journey I had undertaken. I sent my handwritten journal and a shoebox full of photos to my editor and told her to publish them as quickly as possible. I figured that it could only be a matter of time before the existence of D'ni was revealed to the world, and I wanted to be the one to break the news.

The weeks between my return from the Cleft and the publication of my journal were among the most anxious of my life. On one hand, I wanted to contact Dr. Watson immediately and join the DRC in exploring every facet of D'ni without delay. On the other, I was sure that the publication of my journal would be such a sensation that I'd be given all of the resources and freedom I needed to return to D'ni and fully document the DRC's restoration of the city. I opted for the latter choice, little suspecting that fate was about to throw me a curveball.

After weeks of waiting, my journal was published to absolutely no fanfare. I had gone so far to make preliminary inquiries into getting an agent to schedule what I thought would be the inevitable talk show appearances, but instead I found myself sitting next to a phone that didn't ring for days. Wild conspiracy theories of government cover-ups ran through my head until I realized the true reason that no one was making a big deal about the book: no one believed that it was true. After all, it was released through Prima Publishing, which mainly dealt with video game strategy guides. The events described in the book were so fantastical that most people who looked at it figured that it was just another video game walkthrough. Even photographic evidence of the Ages I had seen couldn't convince a readership jaded by Hollywood's most talented visual effects designers.

It also didn't help that Dr. Watson and the DRC had apparently vanished from the face of the earth. Repeated attempts to contact them went unanswered. Three months after I returned from the Cleft, their phone was disconnected. Letters and copies of my book that I had sent to them were returned to me unopened with no forwarding address. It was as if they had vanished from the face of the earth, leaving me with one less piece of evidence that D'ni existed. There were times that I almost doubted my own memories, until I took out the Linking Book that Yeesha had provided me with at the beginning of my journey. Opening the cover and seeing my Relto in the Linking Panel never failed to erase any doubts I had.

I became obsessed with D'ni. Friends and family, already skeptical of what I'd described to them, thought I had gone completely around the bend. And eventually I realized that

if I didn't get to the bottom of the DRC's disappearance and the true reasons behind Yeesha's journey, I really might lose my mind. I had to return to the Cleft. This time, I wouldn't be scribbling notes in a journal and taking photos with a flimsy drugstore camera. I cleared out my savings account and equipped myself with the best equipment I could buy.

That was yesterday. Tomorrow, I'm opening Yeesha's Linking Book and linking back to my Relto. From there, come hell or high water, I'm going to explore D'ni—by myself if need be. Hopefully, I'll be able to return periodically to the surface and e-mail the accounts of my discoveries to my editor in the hopes that they will be published in some form someday. I know that others out there share my desire to see D'ni, even if only vicariously through a written account.

But quite honestly, even if I'm written off as a crackpot and no one reads another word that I write, I can't abandon my quest, not now. If I do, I know that it will haunt me for the rest of my life.

Return to Relto



My Relto, just as I left it.

Using my Relto Linking Book inside my own apartment was a strange experience. Linking from one Age to another is always vaguely unsettling, but to leave your everyday surroundings and instantly transport to an Age of mystery and wonder is doubly so.

Anyway, my Relto looked pretty much the way I left it. Sheets of rain still pelted the rocky island, an effect of the final Yeesha Page I'd found in the desert Cleft and added to my Linking Book at the end of my first journey.



Yeesha left another book for me.

The only thing that had changed since my last visit to my Relto was the addition of a yellow journal, which I found on a bookshelf in the hut. Yeesha's seal adorned the cover of the journal, and I recognized her handwriting inside. Her message, scrawled across only four pages of the book in free verse, was typically cryptic:

Ae'gura and Bevin

There were some who came here thinking they could build the tree. But only a dead tree is built. Life cannot be assembled from remains. And now these builders are gone.

What has happened to them? Are they now part of the remains, or have they become part of the tree? For the tree does grow, the great cavern breathes, voices in places in the great void. The called continue their journey here. Building or growing, it is their choice. One new book... given to open up paths in the cavern, given to open up the origin, given to open up a glimpse of the future.

I'm guessing that the "builders" are the DRC, who were trying to physically rebuild sections of D'ni. Yeesha makes note of the departure of the DRC as well, and she's either as confused by their departure as I am, or she's playing her cards close to the vest (as usual). It seems like she's contrasting their approach to the restoration of D'ni ("building") with her own more spiritual approach ("growing").

I admit to being a little concerned about the DRC's fate. Yeesha never seemed to see eye-to-eye with them, and she's a writer of incredible power ... did she have something to do with their disappearance? The fact that she seems comfortable with allowing those who feel the Call to make the choice between "building or growing" makes me feel a little better.

The KI



Gahreesen KI dispenser.



New KI functions.

The KI was a device I picked up in Gahreesen during my first journey. I brought it along this time because opening some doors in Gahreesen was impossible without it. Of course, I could have just returned to the KI dispenser near Gahreesen's link-in point and simply picked up another had I forgotten to bring mine.

Linking back to my Relto seemed to automatically upgrade several of the KI's features. There were now four different buttons I could press on the KI:

1. **Take Picture:** The KI can be used as a camera to grab still images. Glad I spent all of that money on a new digital camera!
 2. **Display Pictures:** Review pictures taken with the KI by pressing this button. Press the right and left arrows on the display screen to scroll through them.
 3. **Sound:** Amplify or mute the ambient soundtracks of the Ages you visit.
 4. **Put Away:** Pressing this button puts the KI into an inactive mode. Automatic functions (like opening doors) still operate.
- It still seems as if I'm just scratching the surface of what the KI can do. For instance, there are three symbols on a screen projected from the right side of the KI, but I've got no idea what they mean. It seems as if the KI adds new functions to itself as they are needed, so I'll stick with what I know about it for now.

The other bookshelf in the hut contained all of the Linking Books I'd acquired in my first journey. From left to right, the Linking Books lead to:

1. Tomahna/Desert Cleft
2. Gahreesen
3. Teledahn
4. Kadish Tolesa
5. Eder Kemo
6. Eder Gira
7. Four isolated areas of D'ni (Sharper's office, Kadish's museum, a D'ni balcony, and a D'ni rooftop)
8. Other areas of D'ni (a new neighborhood and an isolated balcony with an engraved slab of stone)



Linking Book bookshelf.



The rightmost book had a new Linking Panel in it.

Only one of the eight Linking Books had changed at all; the rightmost one now contained a new Linking Panel that showed a new area of D'ni. And unlike the other links I had to D'ni, this one looked like it was in the middle of a neighborhood, not on an isolated balcony or rooftop. I placed my hand on the Linking Panel and linked to an area of D'ni that I would come to know as the Bevin Neighborhood.

Bevin Neighborhood



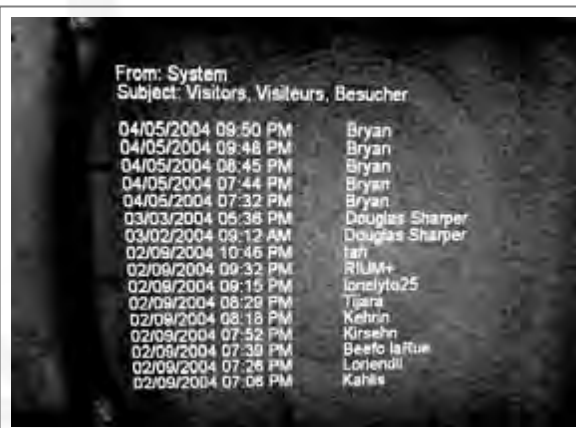
A beach ball and road cones. The DRC must have been here.

The first thing I saw when I linked into Bevin was a multicolored beach ball and several orange safety cones. It was a pretty safe bet that these weren't of D'ni construction; this must have been one of the areas the DRC was in the process of restoring.



Handy of them to leave a sign for me.

An easel held a sign that welcomed visitors (in English) to Bevin and directed them to a classroom for more information.



Looks like some sort of visitor log.

Before heading to the classroom, I checked out the immediate surroundings and found two imaging devices nearby.

The first imager displayed a visitor log. My name was at the top of the list as the most recent visitor. Just below my name was Douglas Sharper's. I recognized Sharper's name from some journals I found during my first journey. He was a DRC member who had been placed in charge of the restoration of Teledahn. From reading his journals, I got the impression that Sharper didn't care for the DRC's rules and regulations, and he was definitely engaging in some activities that Dr. Watson would not have approved of. According to the imager log, Sharper had arrived for two visits on March 2 and 3, 2004.

Below Sharper's name was a list of explorers who had popped in on February 9, 2004. After this flurry of activity, there was nothing until Sharper showed up. What happened?



Photos of recent explorers—taken with a KI?

The second imager displayed a series of pictures of DRC explorers in Bevin. They seemed to be having a good time. I wondered why they stopped coming?

Classroom

Before I started exploring in earnest, I decided to follow the sign to the classroom. As I crossed the bridge to the classroom, I accidentally kicked a glowing object that skidded along in front of me. I recognized it from the *Myst* novels as a D'ni fire marble.



Door to the classroom.

The door to the classroom was just past the end of the bridge. I pressed the glowing blue button in the center of it to open it.



I've already got my KI, thanks.



An imager lays down some of the DRC ground rules.

Several signs hung from the walls of the classroom. One welcomed explorers to D'ni. Another advised explorers without KIs to link to Gahreesen to pick them up. An imager on one of the walls dispensed helpful advice, such as "avoid drinking the lake water" and "only use approved Linking Books." A note sat on a desk near the imager. Unfortunately, it was written in D'ni, which I can't read.



Got to learn to read D'ni.

The classroom was obviously intended for first-time visitors. Since I'd already taken Yeesha's journey, I felt confident that I was ready to embark on this new one. It was time to explore D'ni.

Yeesha Page: Islands



D'ni symbols projected by a shattered imager.

I descended staircases until I reached a small water garden. A shattered imager displayed some flickering D'ni symbols nearby.



Jumped up onto this stone platform.



Saw a Yeesha Page stuck to the side of a nearby window frame.

I crossed the rock pathways of the water garden to get a better look at the fungi growing out of the lampposts. I hopped up on a small rocky platform near a window and caught a glimpse of a piece of paper stuck to the side of the window frame.

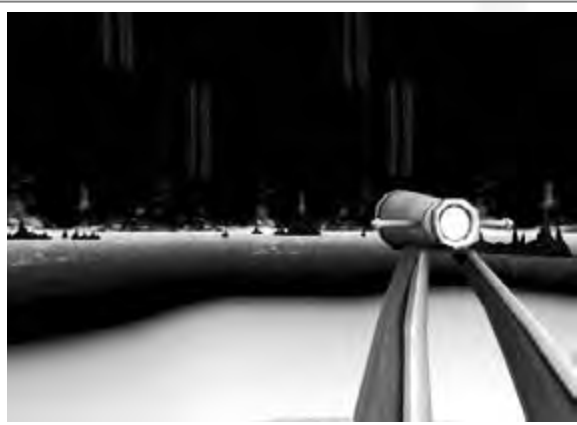


The Yeesha Page added islands to my Relto.

I reached out and touched the paper. It was a Yeesha Page! I flipped open my Linking Book and saw that another Yeesha Page had been added to the book. Linking back to my Relto, I saw that the main island of Relto was now surrounded by several smaller islands. After checking them out, I used the Bevin Linking Book in the hut to return to D'ni.

Other Areas of Interest

Telescope



Telescope near the link-in point overlooks several islands.

Near Bevin's link-in point was a telescope that looked out over several islands in the distance. I took a look through

the telescope and saw buildings on the islands, but without a boat or a Linking Book that could take me to them, I'd have to settle for seeing them from a distance.

Lecture Hall



Pressing this button played an audio recording.

Climbing the stairs above the link-in point led me to a lecture hall of sorts. Pressing the blue button on the podium at the front of the hall played a short speech, but the audio quality was so poor that I couldn't determine if the speech was in D'ni or in a human language other than English.

Linking Book



Linking Book on a pedestal in a room near the classroom.

I opened a door near the classroom entrance to find a small room with a podium in the center. On the podium

was an open Linking Book. A device next to the book bore the symbol of the KI. I placed my KI in the device, and the symbol glowed blue.

Since I'd explored every other part of Bevin that I could reach, I placed my hand on the Linking Panel.

Nexus

I appeared in a small dark room that throbbed with the sound of humming machinery. I wished I'd had the foresight to bring a fire marble through the link with me. The room had only one light, which illuminated a machine in the corner.



The machine in the dimly lit room had a KI symbol on it.

The machine had a KI slot in it, similar to the one next to the Linking Book in Bevin. I placed my KI in the slot, and a panel to the right of it came to life.



Touching the KI to the slot activated a panel with two names on it.

The panel displayed the names of two areas: Ferry Terminal and Bevin. To the right of each was a string of zeroes. I ran my finger over the words "Ferry Terminal," and a button at the top of the panel glowed.



Touched "Ferry Terminal" and the glowing button to reveal a Linking Book.

I pressed the button, and a Linking Book popped out of the machine. The image on the Linking Panel seemed to be another location in D'ni. Now I understood the purpose of the room. According to D'ni linking rules, you couldn't link from one point in an Age to another point in the same Age. This must have been some sort of Nexus in an intermediary Age that allowed the D'ni people to link to different locations in D'ni. I put my hand on the Linking Panel and transported through.

Ferry Terminal



Kerath's Arch overlooks ruined D'ni boats.

My link-in point to the ferry terminal brought me to a dock overlooking D'ni's vast underground lake. Kerath's Arch, a monument devoted to the greatest of the D'ni kings, rose up from it. A ruined D'ni boat drifted in the murky lake.



All of the docked D'ni boats were wrecked.

In the hopes of reaching the islands I'd seen through the Bevin telescope, I started looking for an intact boat. However, a quick examination of the area proved futile. None of the boats docked in the harbor were in any useful condition.



I could only go halfway up the Great Stairs.

An enormous staircase (which I identified as D'ni's Great Stairs) stretched up from the link-in point, but a DRC barricade prevented me from reaching the top of them. I wasn't thrilled at this, but I was at least grudgingly thankful that the DRC had pinpointed all of D'ni's dangerous areas before they disappeared.



A Linking Book and KI slot near the link-in point.

I returned to the link-in point where I found a Linking Book to the Nexus room and a KI slot. If I wanted to return to Bevin for any reason, I could link to the Nexus and link from there to Bevin.

Linking Stone and Yeesha Page



A Bahro Linking Stone near the Linking Book.

Down the hallway past the Linking Book was a Bahro Linking Stone, half hidden in shadow. I had seen similar Linking Stones in Teledahn and Gahreesen during my first journey. They operated like Linking Books, transporting anyone who touched their Linking Panels to different Ages.



The Linking Stone took me to Teledahn.

I placed my hand on the stone's Linking Panel and reappeared in a part of Teledahn that I'd never seen before. Aside from a Yeesha Page directly in front of me, there was nowhere else to go and nothing else to do.



The Yeesha Page added a dock to my Relto.

After touching the Yeesha Page to add it to my Linking Book, I used the Linking Book to return to my Relto and see that the Yeesha Page had added a dock to my Relto.

I was now at a crossroads. I had visited all of the new areas that weren't part of my original journey. I wasn't sure where to go next. This seemed as good a place as any to take a break, write up an account of my exploration so far, and catch a bit of shut-eye.



Douglas Sharper's Secrets

Sharper's Offices



Used the Teledahn Linking Book to return to Teledahn's link-in point.

After a brief rest in my Relto, I thought about where to go next. The only lead I had was the visitor log showing that Douglas Sharper had used D'ni Linking Books almost a full month after the last of the DRC explorers had stopped coming to D'ni. I remembered that Sharper had an office in Teledahn, the Age he oversaw for the DRC, and a secret office in D'ni. I decided to check out both and see if anything had changed from my first visit. Using the Teledahn Linking Book from my Relto, I linked to Teledahn.

NOTE

I also noticed that a new Linking Book with a yellow spine had appeared on my Linking Book bookshelf. Its Linking Panel showed the Nexus that I had used to travel from Bevin to the D'ni ferry terminal. If I needed to return to any of those locations, I could do so with the Nexus Linking Book.



Headed over to the bucket loader mechanism, Teledahn's makeshift elevator.

I was relieved to see that everything in Teledahn was exactly as I had left it. The power tower was still raised and harvesting solar energy to power the Age's mechanisms, and the bucket loading mechanism was still operational.



Stopped the buckets by pulling the lever, then pulled the lever again and jumped into a bucket before they started moving again.

I pulled the lever near the bucket loader to stop the buckets from moving. The timing was a little tricky, as I needed to stop the buckets so that one of them faced the

Douglas Sharper's Secrets

nearby walkway. This took several tries. Once the bucket was in the proper position, I pulled the lever again, ran down to the nearest bucket, and climbed in just as the buckets started rotating again. This brought me to the bucket loader control room.



Rode the elevator up to Sharper's Teledahn office.

I touched the Journey Cloth on the wall of the control room as a precaution. That would allow me to link directly back to this room without having to ride the buckets again. With that done, I called the control room elevator by pressing the glowing blue button near it. I entered the elevator and pressed the "up" button (also blue) to ride it to Sharper's office.



Sharper's D'ni office Linking Book, still hidden in the fish tank.

Everything in Sharper's office was exactly as I'd left it. Even the secret compartment in the aquarium (which I'd opened by holding down the tank's lamp switch for three seconds) was still open. Did that mean that Sharper hadn't been back here to close it, or was he confident that no one else would be back here either? I decided to investigate further. Placing my hand on the aquarium Linking Book, I linked to Sharper's secret D'ni office.



This journal wasn't here during my last journey.

My instincts proved to be correct. Although Sharper's D'ni office didn't seem to have changed a bit since my last journey, he had left a journal labeled "Douglas Sharper '04" on his desk. A note stuck to the cover featured a crude sketch of the DRC logo. I sat down at the desk, took out my laptop, and started copying Sharper's journal word-for-word.

NOTE

Sharper's 2004 journal is reprinted in its entirety in the "Notes and Journals" section of this book.



Sharper's 2004 Journal

Notes on Sharper's 2004 Journal

Sharper's first journal entry is dated January 23, 2004, and it details his shock at hearing that the DRC is abandoning the restoration of D'ni. Despite Sharper's dislike of the DRC bureaucracy, he seems to have developed a genuine affection for the Ages and the work he was doing. He even seems to have smoothed things over with the DRC hierarchy who he used to complain about so bitterly. Sharper makes a note of Laxman (a senior DRC member) stripping the advanced functions from the KIs and implementing some sort of remote upgrade for them. This explains the changes in my KI since my last journey.

Sharper mentions several things that stood out when I read them. The first is a mysterious "coordinate" that Zandi is somehow "sending out," presumably to Sharper and others, though Sharper doesn't mention who else has received it or where it's being sent. The coordinate is 2175.58.-81, and the message that accompanies it says that "the gathered will tell the path of the shell." That's probably worth remembering.

The second is a "spy room" that is apparently in the Teledahn slave caves.

Sharper had previously kept it secure, but with the departure of the DRC, there's no reason to do so anymore. Apparently there's a "Book" inside the spy room, and from the capitalization, I'm assuming it's a Linking Book. I've got to try and find it. The only clue Sharper gives to the location of the spy room is that "if there had been two [explorers], all they had to do was close the door and their friend would have seen the Book."

The last item of note involves a DRC explorer by the name of Phil. Apparently, the Linking Book in the spy room is Phil's Relto Linking Book. Sharper seems to be haunted by Phil's memory and may have been responsible for Phil's death. It sounds as if Sharper stole Phil's Relto Book, and when Phil needed to use it to escape a crumbling precipice, he realized too late that it wasn't at his side.

Sharper's last entry makes note of his suspicions that he's not alone. He might have noticed the evidence of my explorations.

Slave Caves



Linked back to my Relto and back to Teledahn's original link-in point.

After reading Sharper's 2004 journal, I had three leads to follow up: Zandi's mysterious coordinate, the Teledahn slave cave spy room, and the late Phil's Relto Linking Book. Because the spy room and Relto Book were related, I decided to head to the slave caves and try to find them. The quickest way for me to reach the caves was to link back to my Relto and from there link to Teledahn's original link-in point.

NOTE

I could have linked back to Sharper's Teledahn office via the Linking Book in his D'ni office, and from there taken the elevator down two floors to the hut.



Descended the ladders below Teledahn's link-in point to reach a cavern that led to the slave caves.

The hatch in the bottom of the hut at the link-in point was still unlocked and open from my last journey. I descended the two ladders below it to reach the cavern that led to the slave caves.



Raised golden switches represented the combination to the cell door.



Had to roll rocks and bones onto the proper combination of pressure plates to open the slave cave door.



Sharper's map (renumbered with Arabic numerals), which labels the pressure plates.

Remembering my first journey through the slave caves, I recalled that the seven pressure plates in the "slave pen" area I was in corresponded to the seven switches located in the "switch room" beyond the cell door. To open the slave pen door, I needed to roll rocks or bones onto the

pressure plates indicated by the raised yellow switches in the switch room beyond.

Referring to a map on Sharper's desk that I photographed during my original journey, I figured out which pressure plates corresponded to which switches. For instance, the upper-left switch on the map was labeled with the D'ni numeral 4, and the fourth switch from the left was raised, so that meant that pressure plate #4 needed to be weighed down.

NOTE

Because different explorers may encounter different lever combinations, it's impossible to give a simple answer to this puzzle. Should anyone try to follow my journey, remember to first look at which switches are activated, then weigh down the corresponding pressure plates to open the slave pen door.



Ran down this pathway past the power tower to reach the "back entrance" of the slave caves.

Once I opened the slave pen cell door, I was able to enter the switch room. I could see a Linking Book in an alcove beyond the switch room's locked gate. I flipped one switch to change the switch combination, and this opened the switch room gate and closed the slave pen gate. However, the alcove with the Linking Book shut as well. I realized that I'd have to reset the switch I'd just pulled so that the slave pen gate was open and the switch gate was closed, then I'd have to backtrack to the "back entrance" of the slave caves.

The easiest way to backtrack was to climb back up the ladders leading to the hut at the link-in point of Teledahn. From there, I ran along the pathway past the power tower and across a section of the pathway that I had knocked down onto a large mushroom during my last journey.

NOTE



It was a lucky break that I was still able to cross this unstable section of broken pathway. If it wasn't available to me, I would have had to continue through the slave caves, touch a Journey Cloth beyond them, reset the slave cave switches so that the Linking Book was visible, and then link to the Journey Cloth to reach the Linking Book.



Followed the pathway to the back entrance of the slave caves.

I followed the metal pathway past the mushroom until I reached the cavern with a Journey Cloth and the Bahro Cave door. I continued past both of these and into a small round room with a metal walkway. Exiting this room through its open door brought me to a plateau with a path leading directly to the back entrance of the slave caves.



The Linking Book, at last.

Once I reached the back entrance of the slave caves, it was a simple matter to enter, find the Linking Book, and use it to link to Sharper's spy room.

New Clothing: Tie-Dye T-Shirt



During my return to Teledahn, I took a few moments to explore other areas of the Age that I hadn't seen in some time. It was in one of these areas that I found a new piece of clothing.



A tie-dye T-shirt was located in the room directly above the room with the metal walkway that led to the Bahro Cave door. The shirt was lying on a crate near the last Journey Cloth I had found in the Age. It wasn't exactly my style, but I grabbed it anyway and added it to my Relto wardrobe.

Spy Room



Sharper's spy room.

Sharper's spy room was exactly what it sounded like: a small hidden chamber from which Sharper was able to keep tabs on his unwitting DRC compatriots. The room was dominated by a giant telescope.



Who the heck is "Bob O'goobo?"

I looked through the telescope, which was fixed on a DRC office. An easel held a diagram of a round room with the name "Bob O'goobo" above it. Smears of colored paint stood out on the edge of the diagram. A couple of Linking Books sat open on the desk in front of the easel.



Sharper must have thought he was a real cowboy.

Sharper's hat sat next to the telescope. I picked it up and put it on. Good fit, though I dropped it off in my Relto wardrobe at the first opportunity.



Linking Book back to Teledahn.



The late Phil's Relto Linking Book.

The only other items of note were two Linking Books, one of which linked to Sharper's Teledahn office, and the other which looked like the Relto Linking Book that previously belonged to the deceased Phil. I'd already seen Sharper's office, so I used Phil's Book to link to his Relto.

Phil's Relto



Phil had a lot more Linking Books in his Relto than I did.

The first thing I noticed upon linking into Phil's Relto was the huge number of Linking Books it contained. Mine had fewer than a dozen, but his boasted no fewer than 36. All but one was locked in the shelf.



Looks like a link to another D'ni neighborhood.

The single unlocked book on the shelf appeared to link to another D'ni neighborhood similar to Bevin. I noticed that the Linking Book occupied the same spot on Phil's shelf as my Bevin Book occupied on my own. I decided not to link through just yet, preferring to explore the rest of Phil's Relto first.



Two books and a DRC vest in the other bookshelf.

The other bookshelf held two books and Phil's vest. I grabbed the vest and put it on—a perfect fit. The two books turned out to be journals, one from Yeesha, and the other from Phil. Yeesha's journal was the same as the one she left me at the beginning of my first journey, with cryptic clues about the five Ages I would explore.

Phil's journal contained his reactions to the DRC's reconstruction of D'ni. He seemed to share Yeesha's skepticism about the DRC's approach, noting that "rebuilt trees make fences and walls" while "restored trees make fruit

and shade." His last entries emphasized his dissatisfaction with the path he had chosen and a desire to seek out a higher different path. He apparently felt as if someone or something was "calling" to him.



Two moons in Phil's Relto.

Having examined the contents of Phil's hut, I stepped out of it to take a look at the rest of his Relto. It was identical to my own with the exception of a pair of moons that hung in the sky. Were all of the Reltos slightly different, or were the moons an effect of a Yeesha Page I had not yet discovered?



Linked to the D'ni neighborhood in Phil's Book.

There wasn't anything else to see in Phil's Relto, so I opened the only Linking Book I could remove from the shelf and placed my hand on the Linking Panel, transporting myself to the D'ni neighborhood of Kirel.

Kirel Neighborhood



Kirel greatly resembles Bevin.

Seeing Kirel gave me a better idea of how D'ni neighborhoods were constructed. Many of the features I had considered unique to Bevin—such as the lecture hall, water garden, and classroom—turned out to be common to Kirel as well (and presumably other D'ni neighborhoods).

Lecture Hall



Pressing the blue button in the lecture hall lectern played a DRC voice message.

I found Kirel's lecture hall in roughly the same place as Bevin's. Pressing the blue button on the lectern played a lengthy audio address from a senior member of the DRC.

The message referred to the reconstruction of an island known as Ae'gura and certain areas of it being opened.

The speaker also mentions that KIs have the ability to determine the wearer's precise location in any Age, and he makes a reference to something called the "Great Zero" and how it needs to be calibrated.

Finally, the speaker encourages explorers not to use Linking Books that have not been approved by the DRC. He is aware that mysterious "stones, books, cloths, and pages" have been found, but rather than banning their use outright, he simply says that anyone foolhardy enough to use them does so at their own risk. The DRC has attempted to remove the objects unsuccessfully, and anyone caught placing the objects will be banned from the cavern.

Classroom



Dr. K.'s (Kodama's?) final message to the DRC explorers.

Kirel's classroom was also in approximately the same location as Bevin's. I entered it and saw a single imager flickering a final message from a "Dr. K." (presumably Dr. Kodama of the DRC):

The last group is leaving at 5. You are on your own after that. Victor Laxman (vlaxman@drcsite.org) will be organizing any contact on the surface. Write him if you wish.

Goodbye.

Dr. K.

Nexus Link



Another Linking Book next to a KI reader.

I found a Linking Book next to a KI reader on a pedestal in the center of the neighborhood, just as I had in Bevin. I placed my KI in the reader, looked at the book, and linked to the same Nexus room I'd linked into before.



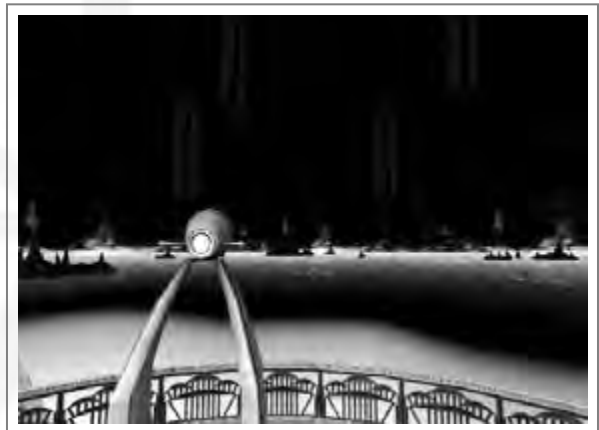
Now Kirel is on the list of locations.

When I activated the Nexus terminal, three names appeared: Ferry Terminal, Bevin, and now Kirel. All of a sudden, I understood the KI-reading devices. Somehow they unlocked areas so that someone from this Nexus room could link into them. I used the machine to link back to Kirel, wondering as I did why so many of the locations weren't activated. Was it an equipment malfunction, or was it an attempt at securing D'ni from some sort of threat?



Another visitor log imager.

I returned to Kirel's link-in point from the Nexus. A flickering imager caught my eye. It displayed the names of the last few DRC explorers to enter or leave Kirel. Once again, my name was at the top, followed by Victor Laxman, Douglas Sharper, and several other top DRC officials. Looking at the log, I realized that Kirel didn't seem to be a neighborhood that the DRC rank-and-file were allowed to frequent; it was reserved for the higher-ups.



Another telescope aimed at an island—Ae'gura?

Near the imager was another telescope pointed toward a distant island, just as in Bevin. I looked through the viewfinder at the island and wondered if this could be the Ae'gura Island described in the lecture hall voice recording.

Private Rooms

I spent a long time exploring every inch of Kirel before I started to worry that I'd reached a dead end. Nothing about Kirel seemed radically different from Bevin. Nothing, that is, except for three small buttons—blue, green, and orange—on the railing of a bridge overlooking the water garden. I pressed the buttons, but all they seemed to do was turn the water garden lights on and off.



Blue, green, orange buttons on bridge over water garden.

After spending much time around D'ni puzzles, I felt that itch in the back of my brain that told me I was staring at another, even if it just appeared to be a few light switches. I sat down and started looking back through the pictures I had taken.

One stood out: a shot I'd taken through Sharper's spy room telescope. The easel with the "Bob O'goobo" sign caught my eye. When I looked at it more closely, I saw the blue, green, and orange paint smears at the edge of the sign.

That's when it hit me: "Bob O'goobo" wasn't a person—it was a mnemonic device to remember a code: B-O-B-O-G-O-O-B-O, or blue-orange-blue-orange-green-orange-blue-orange! I pressed the buttons in sequence.



Door next to the classroom now unlocked.

At first, nothing seemed to happen, but then I thought I heard a low rumble of machinery near the door to the classroom. I went over to the classroom door to investigate and saw that the door next to it was now unlocked!



The center of the room had five alcoves, each with a Bahro Linking Stone.

The door opened into a room with five alcoves, each of which held a Bahro Linking Stone. It seemed as if the DRC had locked these away so that unauthorized explorers wouldn't be tempted to use them. I didn't find any instructions for their use, or any notes at all from the DRC, so I decided to explore the areas that the Stones linked to.



Four of these led to exterior areas of Ae'gura Island. One led to the Great Zero.

NOTE

Starting with the Bahro Linking Stone directly opposite the entrance to the private rooms and moving clockwise around them, the Stones link to:

1. Tokotah Alley
2. Concert Hall Foyer
3. Great Zero
4. Library Courtyard
5. Palace Alcove

I used each Stone to link to its respective area. It turned out that the five Linking Stones led to five different areas of Ae'gura Island. Four of the stones led to exterior areas of Ae'gura. The fifth stone led to the Great Zero, which I think is on Ae'gura, but I'm not sure.

My explorations of both areas took a great deal of time and effort. To simplify the information that I have to present, I've decided to cover Ae'gura Island's exterior in the next chapter and dedicate the chapter following that one to the Great Zero.

Linking Books

After using each Bahro Linking Stone in Kirel, I returned to my Relto to rest. I flipped through each of my Linking Books and made a note of the Linking Panels that they contained; the Books are numbered from left to right. This turned out to be an extremely valuable bit of organization, as it made the rest of my journey much simpler knowing how to move quickly and easily from one location to another.

Book One (Cleft)



Tomahna (rainy Cleft): Given to me by Yeesha at the end of my first journey.



Well (link-in point): Original link-in point; only Linking Panel in Book when I found it in a Bahro Pillar.



Cleft (original): Given to me by Yeesha at the end of my first journey.



Prison: Link from a Bahro Linking Stone found near the end of my original Teledahn journey.

Book Two (Gahreesen)



Journey Cloth: Links to last Journey Cloth touched in the Age.

Book Three (Teledahn)



Journey Cloth: Links to last Journey Cloth touched in the Age.



Hut (link-in point):
Original link-in point; only Linking Panel in Book when I found it in a Bahro Pillar.



Shroom Stump: Link from a Bahro Linking Stone found in Sharper's D'ni office.



Broken Shroomie Feeder: Link from a Bahro Linking Stone found near the ferry terminal.

Book Four (Kadish Tolesa)



Journey Cloth: Links to last Journey Cloth touched in the Age.



Base of Tree (link-in point): Original link-in point; only Linking Panel in Book when I found it in a Bahro Pillar.

Book Five (Eder Gira)



Journey Cloth: Links to last Journey Cloth touched in the Age.



Upper Gira (link-in point): Original link-in point; only Linking Panel in Book when I found it in a Bahro Pillar.

Book Six (Eder Kemo)



Journey Cloth: Links to last Journey Cloth touched in the Age.



Bridge (link-in point): Original link-in point; link from the Linking Book found in Lower Gira.

Book Seven (Ae'gura Island, City of D'ni)



Great Zero: Link from a Bahro Linking Stone found in the private rooms of Kirel Neighborhood.



Sharper's spy room: link from a Linking Book found in the Teledahn slave caves.



Sharper's D'ni office: Link from a Linking Book found in the aquarium in Sharper's Teledahn office.



Kadish's Museum: Link from a Linking Book found in the courtyard at the beginning of my first journey through Kadish Tolesa.



Ae'gura Balcony: Link from a Bahro Linking Stone found near the beginning of my first journey through Kadish Tolesa.



DRC Rooftop Work Area: Link from a Bahro Linking Stone found in Lower Gira.



Tokotah Alley: Link from a Kirel Linking Stone; also accessible via Nexus machine.

Book Eight (Bevin Neighborhood)



Courtyard: Link-in point added to the Book by Yeesha after my first journey, and as the starting point for my second journey.

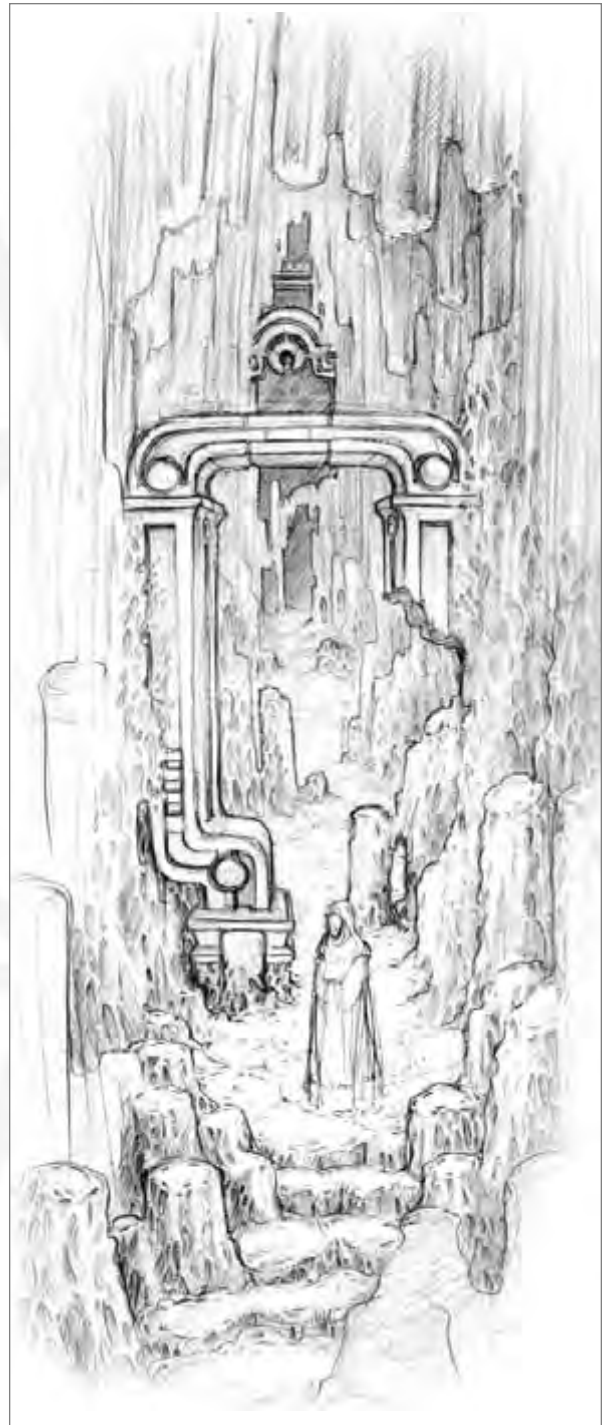


Balcony: Link from a Bahro Linking Stone found near the beginning of my first Gahreesen journey.

Book Nine (Nexus)



Nexus: Links to the Nexus Machine and—from there—all Nexus points activated with a KI.



Ae'gura Island

I began my exploration of Ae'gura Island by using the Bahro Linking Stone closest to the entrance of Kirel's private rooms. This brought me to Tokotah Alley.



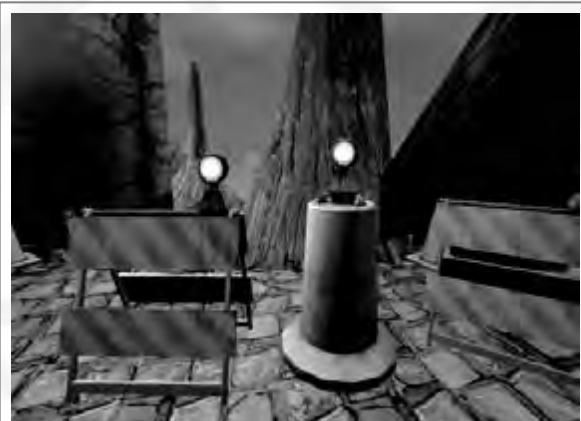
Bahro Stones always linked me near KI readers and Nexus Linking Books.



Activating each KI reader created a link to that location in the Nexus Machine.

As I explored the island, I noticed that the four Bahro Stones that linked to the exterior parts of the island always placed me near a Nexus Linking Book and KI reader. I made sure to activate all four KI readers with my KI so that I could use the Nexus Machine to link to any of those four points.

Using the Nexus Machine was a bit more convenient than linking back to Kirel and trying to remember which Bahro Stone linked to a particular location in Ae'gura.



Mind the gap.

From my link-in point at Tokotah Alley, there was only one way to go—unless I was feeling suicidal and decided to run off of the crumbling cliff behind me.



DRC worksite, with an extremely helpful map.



What's this? Some sort of crustacean?

I walked up a large set of stairs and took a left to find an abandoned DRC worksite. A large blurry photograph lay on a table; it seemed to be of some sort of creature, but I couldn't decipher it.

The most helpful piece of information I found was a map of all of the areas of Ae'gura that the DRC had explored. I would discover later in my own explorations that Ae'gura was a huge and sprawling place, and having this map kept me from getting lost on more than one occasion.

Since the DRC had numbered the eight most important points of interest for me, I've decided to structure my own explorer's notes along the lines of their map.

NOTE

Although I found my exploration of Ae'gura Island to be fascinating and well worth the time and effort I put into it, I realized in retrospect that it essentially amounted to a detour from my main quest. Explorers who follow in my footsteps are encouraged to see all there is to see in Ae'gura, but more impatient adventurers may wish to simply skip to the "Great Zero" section of this book—but only after activating Ae'gura's four KI readers in the following locations:

- Tokotah Alley
- Concert hall foyer
- Library courtyard
- Palace alcove



Ae'gura Island map.

1. Ferry Terminal



Couldn't have returned to the main part of Ae'gura without linking.

I could have reached the ferry terminal from the main part of Ae'gura Island by leaping over the barricade at the bottom of the Great Stairs. I decided not to bother, because I'd already investigated the ferry terminal earlier in my journey.



So ... many ... stairs....

From an archaeological perspective, it was a real treat to be able to descend most of D'ni's Great Stairs. But halfway through my climb back up the steps, I wished I hadn't bothered!

2. Tokotah II



The map referred to a rooftop high above the Great Stairs.

The point labeled "Tokotah II" on the map referred to a rooftop high above the Great Stairs. At one end of the rooftop was a telescope positioned in a narrow parapet. There didn't seem to be any way to get up there from here, but something was familiar about that telescope.



Had to use the Ae'gura Linking Book in my Relto to reach the roof.

I remembered linking to a D'ni rooftop in my first journey via a Linking Stone in Eder Gira. I linked back to my Relto and used my Ae'gura Linking Book to return to the rooftop. Sure enough, it was the same one.



View from the telescope was of the courtyard in which I was just standing.

Looking through the telescope, I could see the courtyard in which I was just standing. I climbed up on some crates and saw the tip of Kerath's Arch poking above the rooftop wall.



Safety first!

The journals I had found during my first visit were still here. The DRC had also left a number of hard hats lying around, which weren't there last time. Most were orange, but there was also a single white DRC hat (presumably for a supervisor). I took one of each as souvenirs back to my Relto.

To leave the rooftop and return to the main part of Ae'gura Island, I had to link back to my Relto and use the Ae'gura Linking Book.

3. Tokotah



If there was a way up here, I didn't know it.

Point #3 on the Ae'gura map was another Tokotah rooftop. Despite repeated efforts, I didn't find any way to reach it. It was one of only two areas I couldn't explore, the other being point #5, the guild hall. Still, I was confident that if these sites were numbered on the map, the DRC had found a way to reach them, and hopefully I would too someday.

4. Museum



Museum entrance.

The entrance to the museum was at the end of an alley just past the DRC worksite and Ae'gura map. The door opened automatically for me as I approached it.



Museum interior.

It was obvious that the museum had seen better days, but it was equally obvious that, in its prime, the museum was a structure of unparalleled beauty. Paintings on the walls seemed to commemorate D'ni of importance (kings, perhaps).



The fauna of "Negilahn?"

On a table near the museum entrance, I found a piece of paper that seemed to show the scale of various strange beasts in relation to a human-sized figure. The upper-left corner of the paper read "Negilahn." Some of the creatures were positively gargantuan. I can't say that I'm looking forward to visiting Negilahn after seeing that.



A Yeesha Page on an empty pedestal.

Aside from a few paintings and rows of empty pedestals, there wasn't much to see or do in the museum. The DRC had blocked off most of the lower levels, probably because of the crumbling masonry and high risk of a cave-in. I did find a Yeesha Page on one of the empty pedestals, however, and it added a sun and two moons to my Relto, just like Phil's Relto had.

(When I stopped to think about how powerful Yeesha must be to add celestial bodies to an Age, my head started to hurt. So I stopped thinking about it almost immediately.)

5. Guild Hall



Unfortunately, I couldn't reach the guild hall.

As mentioned previously, I couldn't enter the Ae'gura guild hall either, which was a bit of a letdown. From what I knew of D'ni history, their form of government changed from a monarchy to an oligarchy of guild masters when the last D'ni king, Kerath, voluntarily relinquished his power to the guilds. Kerath's Arch was renamed by the guilds in tribute to the man who had the foresight to know that D'ni's future was in the hands of its craftsmen, not its kings.

Having the chance to explore the guild hall would have given me insight not only into the various arts of the guilds, but also into D'ni's government. But I again consoled myself with the thought that if the DRC had started exploring the guild hall, I would eventually discover how they entered it and see it for myself.

6. Palace



Palace alcove KI reader and Nexus Linking Book.

I squeezed past a DRC barricade and climbed a large set of stairs to reach the palace alcove. At the top of the stairs was a KI reader and a Nexus Linking Book that I made sure to activate so I could link back to this location from the Nexus Machine at any point.



Histories of 26 of the D'ni kings.

Beyond the Nexus Linking Book was a huge round room lined with 26 DRC journals, each of which gave a history of a D'ni king. I was impressed that the typically unsentimental DRC had gone to such lengths to honor the memories of D'ni's rulers. After reading through all of the journals, I had a new appreciation of ancient D'ni history, and a new respect for the personal commitment that DRC members had obviously made to their work.

NOTE

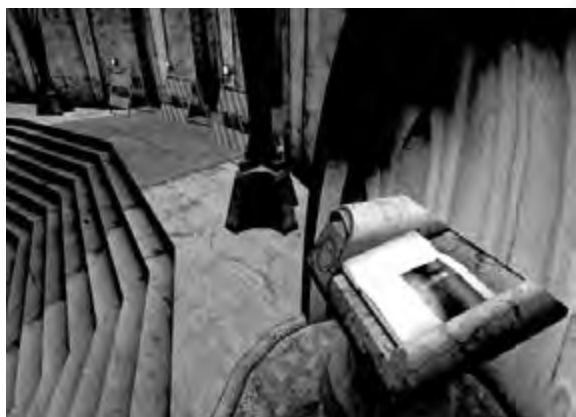
All 26 journals are reprinted in the "Notes and Journals" section of this book.

7. Concert Hall



Not the most confidence-inspiring bridge.

Continuing through the room containing the journals of the D'ni kings, I came to a fork in the path. I took a right and came to a crumbling bridge that had a makeshift rope bridge strung between its two crumbling halves. I looked at the DRC map and saw that the concert hall was on the other side of the bridge. I summoned my nerve and crossed the swaying span, but you can bet that I had one hand hovering above my Linking Book at all times.



I couldn't actually enter the concert hall, but activated the KI reader.

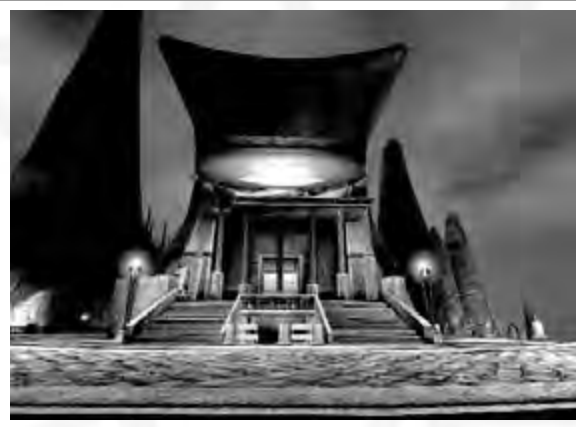
Following the path past the bridge brought me to the concert hall foyer, where I found a KI reader and Nexus Linking Book. I made sure to activate the KI reader so that I could link directly back to this point from the Nexus if I needed to.



I'd seen this view before from a balcony on the other side of the chasm.

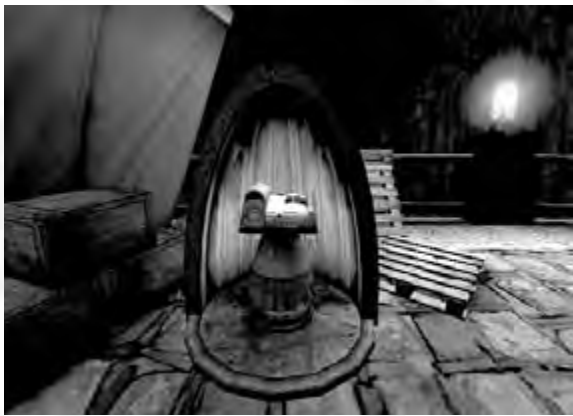
I continued walking along the path (which eventually looped back to the central Ae'gura courtyard). As I did, I realized that I was passing by an area that I had previously seen only from a balcony in my first journey. The Linking Panel was now in my Ae'gura Linking Book, thanks to a Bahro Linking Stone I'd found near the beginning of my first journey through Kadish Tolesa. There was something very comforting about tying up loose ends like that; it made me feel as if I were actually accomplishing something.

8. Library



Library

My last area of interest in Ae'gura was the library. To reach it, I retraced my steps to the fork in the path that led to the bridge, but this time took the other (left-hand) path instead. As might be expected from a culture in which books were so highly prized, the library was an awe-inspiring sight, second only to the guild hall.



Library courtyard KI reader and Nexus Linking Book.

A small DRC worksite, dwarfed by the mammoth library, stood in the courtyard. Next to it was a KI reader and a Nexus Linking Book that I made sure to activate.



Lower library doors were open.

I was disappointed to find that the main library doors were sealed shut, but the lower pair of doors opened for me as I approached them.



Three DRC journals near entrance.

Like the museum, the library was almost completely empty, but I could imagine public Linking Books on the pedestals that lined the walls, a wonder available to all D'ni citizens. The only books I found in the library now, however, were three DRC journals, each of which contained a translation of a D'ni parable.

NOTE All three parables are reprinted in the "Notes and Journals" section of this book.



Library's stairs blocked off.

Much of the library was barricaded off, probably because of well-founded concerns about safety. And other than the KI reader and Linking Book, there was nothing of unusual interest in the library courtyard. I had seen as much of Ae'gura Island as I could see. It was time to continue with my quest and explore the Great Zero.

The Great Zero

Great Zero Antechamber



Great Zero antechamber.

Using the Great Zero Bahro Stone brought me directly to the small Great Zero antechamber. The first thing I noticed was an open Linking Book that linked back to the Nexus. I had the feeling that it would come in handy.



Linking Book and journal.

Next to the Linking Book was a journal that explained the structure and operation of the Great Zero (see sidebar).

NOTE

The Great Zero journal is reprinted in its entirety in the "Notes and Journals" section of this book.

Notes on the Great Zero Journal

Great Zero Structure

The Great Zero structure has three areas:

The *antechamber* is the area that you originally link into. It overlooks the courtyard, which you can't enter initially. It contains a Nexus Linking Book, the Great Zero journal, and a KI upload device.

The *courtyard* is beyond the antechamber. It contains the Great Zero "neutrino dispenser" (whatever that is).

To reach it, you must upload five Great Zero Markers (GZMs) into the antechamber's upload machine. This creates a link to the courtyard from the Nexus Machine.

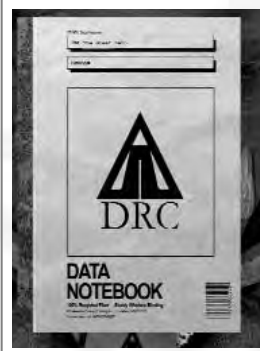
The *calibration center* is accessed via the courtyard after you have uploaded 20 GZMs to your KI. In the calibration center are four Great Zero Maintenance Units (GZMU) and the Calibration Imager (CI), which are somehow used to complete the Great Zero calibration process.

Great Zero Markers

GZMs are found all across the "cavern" (D'ni). A KI device that has been properly upgraded in the antechamber's KI upload machine will make the GZMs visible to the naked eye. Touch a GZM to add it to your KI.

Return to the antechamber to upload GZMs to the Great Zero system via the antechamber's KI upload device. Uploading GZMs is apparently part of the Great Zero calibration process.

The journal doesn't say exactly why calibrating the Great Zero machine is so important. My impression is that it serves as some sort of "north star," providing one reference point that can be used for synchronizing something (KIs? Linking Books? the Nexus Machine?). Still, it seems that calibrating the Great Zero was a big (and unfinished) priority for the DRC.



KI Upgrade



I upgraded my KI at the KI upload machine.

Reading the Great Zero journal left me with as many questions as answers, but I at least had a goal to work toward: finding GZMs. I placed my KI in the antechamber's upload machine to upgrade it.



Upgraded KI

After upgrading the KI, five dim green lights appeared along the circumference of the KI, and a white circular icon started glowing. If the Great Zero journal was accurate, my KI was now ready to activate and collect GZMs.

Finding GZMs



My first GZM, in the Great Zero antechamber.

The first GZM was an easy find. It was in the Great Zero antechamber, near the journal. My KI started beeping loudly as I approached it, and the white "radar" icon on my KI began to pulse red. I simply walked up to the GZM and touched it, and it disappeared. One of the five dim green lights on the KI glowed more brightly. One down, four to go.



I returned to Tokotah Alley and found a GZM on a ledge above the Nexus Book.

I used the Nexus Linking Book and Nexus Machine to link back to Tokotah Alley. My KI started ping as soon as I linked in, and the radar icon turned red, indicating that a GZM was nearby. I climbed up the stairs at the end of the alley and walked along a narrow ledge above the Nexus Linking Book to find my second GZM.



Third GZM was next to the museum entrance.

With five GZMs in my possession, I returned to the Great Zero antechamber by linking back to my Relto and using the Great Zero page in my Ae'gura Linking Book to link directly there. I placed my hand in the antechamber's KI upload device, and the five bright green lights on my KI were replaced with fifteen dull red lights.

My fourth GZM was found inside the museum, near the barricaded stairs. I was relieved that I was able to find so many so quickly. I only needed one more to open the Great Zero courtyard.

According to the journal, the Great Zero courtyard should now be available in the Nexus Machine, so I linked back to the Nexus to investigate. Sure enough, the name "Rezeero" had been added to the list of locations. I linked to it.

52

Great Zero Courtyard (Rezeero)



This must be the "neutrino dispenser."

The courtyard was dominated by an enormous crystalline machine, which I assumed was the "neutrino dispenser" mentioned in the Great Zero journal. Arcs of electricity danced around it, and the hairs on my arms stood up from the static electricity.



KI upload device

At one end of the courtyard was a KI upload device. As I approached it, my KI detected a nearby GZM. I started looking for it.



Yeesha Page at base of stairs.

I descended the huge staircase to the neutrino dispenser. As I walked away from the stairs, my KI stopped beeping. Too far. I walked around one side of the stairs and found a Yeesha Page; when I returned to my Relto, I found that I now had an imager that displayed pictures I'd taken with my KI.



I found the GZM on the other side of the stairs.

I found the GZM that my KI had detected hovering on the other side of the stairs from the Yeesha Page. I wasted no time collecting it.

Finding GZMs

Ae'gura Island



Doors to Great Zero calibration center, I assume.

At the end of the Great Zero courtyard opposite the one I linked into, I found two locked doors with KI symbols that lit dimly when I approached. I figured that these were the doors to the third area, the Great Zero calibration center, and could be opened only once I'd found 14 more GZMs and uploaded them.



I returned to the Nexus Linking Book near link-in point.

I returned to the link-in point and found a Nexus Linking Book nearby. I used it to return to Tokotah Alley and resume my GZM hunt.



#2: Near guild hall barricade

I found the next GZM (number 2 of 15) in front of the DRC barricade that sealed off the entrance to the guild hall. (Remember, I found the first GZM in the Great Zero courtyard.)



#3: Just before fork in the path between rickety bridge and library.

The next GZM was high above the pathway leading to the library and concert hall, just before the fork in the road.



#4: On the rope bridge.

The fourth GZM was on the rope bridge that led to the concert hall. I really did not enjoy reaching for this one.



#5: On the path between bridge and concert hall.

Continuing along the path leading from the bridge to the concert hall, I found the fifth GZM hovering near some stalagmites.



#6: In a gap in front of neighborhood past concert hall.

Getting the sixth GZM almost gave me a heart attack. I had to drop into a gap in front of the buildings just beyond the concert hall. The gap overlooked the chasm, and reaching for the GZM almost caused me to tumble into it. There was no way I could get back out of the gap once I dropped into it, so I had to link back to my Relto, then to the Nexus, and finally back to the concert hall foyer.



#7: Along the path to the library.

GZM number seven was refreshingly easy to find. It hovered above the pathway to the library.



#8: Inside the library, at the bottom of the stairs.

I found GZM number eight by entering the library and going down the stairs as far as I could. It was next to the barricade at the bottom.

Sharper's D'ni Office

With eight GZMs found and nowhere else on Ae'gura to explore by foot, I decided to return to my Relto and link to other locations in D'ni. After all, I'd found one GZM in the Great Zero antechamber and another GZM in the Great Zero courtyard, so it stood to reason that I might find more in other locations.



#9: In front of the painting in Sharper's D'ni office.

My hunch paid off. I found the ninth GZM in Sharper's D'ni office, right in front of the painting of Teledahn.

DRC Rooftop Worksite



#10: At the link-in point of the DRC rooftop worksite.

I found the tenth GZM on the rooftop worksite that the DRC had established (which also had the journals and hard hats).



#11: Floating outside the parapet.

Conveniently enough, GZM number eleven was also on the rooftop. It floated right outside the parapet that didn't have the telescope looking out over Ae'gura's courtyard.

Ferry Terminal

NOTE

Although the ferry terminal is accessible from upper Ae'gura, I'm putting it in a separate section, since I explored it at a different point in my journey.



#12: Near the Bahro Linking Stone.

I found the twelfth GZM hovering near the Bahro Linking Stone in the ferry terminal. Despite the fact that it was on the other side of a locked gate, I was able to reach through and grab it.



#13: Above orange cones.

The next GZM was near the base of the Great Stairs, floating above several orange safety cones left behind by the DRC.



#14: End of terminal pier.

I found the penultimate GZM at the farthest end of the ferry terminal pier, past all of the wrecked ships.

Kirel



#15: In the middle of Kirel's water garden.

The fifteenth and final GZM was hovering above the middle of Kirel's water garden. I snapped it up quickly, made my way up to Kirel's Nexus Linking Book, and linked from Kirel to the Nexus to Rezeero to upload my GZMs.

NOTE

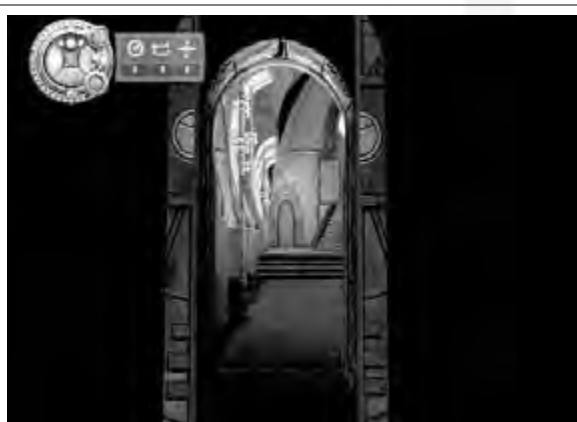
During my search for the GZMs, my KI was triggered several times by GZMs that I could not locate. This leads me to believe that there may have been more GZMs than the 15 I found, but because I needed only 15, that's all I went looking for.

Great Zero Calibration Center



I uploaded the 15 GZMs to the KI upload device.

Upon arriving at the Great Zero courtyard, I accessed the KI upload machine to upload all 15 GZMs I had found in D'ni. With that done, I decided to try the doors at the other end of the courtyard again.



Doors opened after uploading the GZMs.

Just as the Great Zero journal described, the doors to the Great Zero calibration room opened after I uploaded the 15 GZMs I'd just found.

Great Zero Maintenance Units (GZMUs)

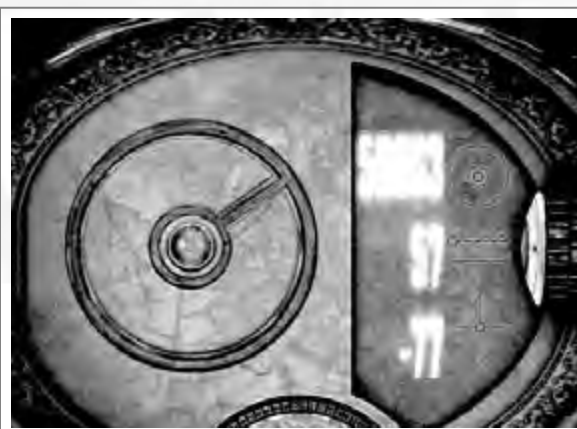


The Great Zero Maintenance Units.

I reread my copy of the Great Zero journal to see what to do next. It mentioned that the calibration room held four GZMUs, which had to be set to complete the calibration of the Great Zero. I found the four GZMUs at the far end of the room, and I was surprised to see that three of the four GZMUs were inscribed with the three symbols on the right side of my KI.

First GZMU Marker ("Arc")

The Great Zero journal said that the next step in calibrating the Great Zero was to activate the GZMUs one by one and find the GZMU Marker for each one.



I activated the first GZMU.

I started with the GZMU that had the same symbol as the leftmost symbol on my KI. Touching the blue button at its center brought up a set of three coordinates, each of which was marked with one of the three KI symbols, which I now understood to be different dimensions of measurement. From top to bottom, I read the coordinates as "arc" (a circular symbol), "distance" (a dotted horizontal line), and "height" (a dotted vertical line).

NOTE

The coordinates for the arc GZMU were:

- Arc: 59863
- Distance: 57
- Height: -77

I touched a blue button in the center of the arc symbol next to the coordinates, and it started blinking. I'd later realize that this activated the arc GZMU Marker that I would have to find.

Unfortunately, because the Great Zero wasn't calibrated, I couldn't just use my KI's coordinates to find the GZMU Marker. In fact, I had to do just the opposite—finding the marker would allow the GZMU to calibrate itself to that particular coordinate. Time to start marker hunting again.



I found the arc GZMU Marker on the Ae'gura balcony.

To make a very long story short, after much searching, I finally found the GZMU Marker on the Ae'gura balcony that overlooked the neighborhood near the concert hall. I used my Ae'gura Linking Book in my Relto to reach it, but if I wanted to take the long way around, I could have used the Bahro Linking Stone in Kadish Tolesa to link there as well.

Second GZMU Marker ("Distance")

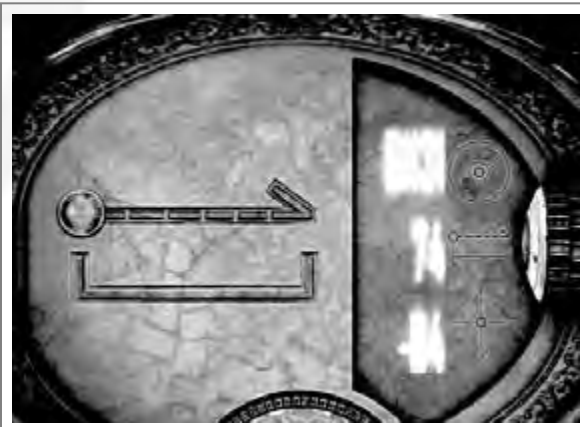


I returned to Great Zero calibration center and uploaded KI data to the arc GZMU.

After snagging the arc GZMU Marker, I linked back to my Relto, then to the Nexus, and then back to the Great Zero courtyard (Rezeero). I walked back to the arc GZMU and placed my KI in its upload device by pressing the blue button at the GZMU's center again. The GZMU Marker uploaded, and the arc symbol next to the coordinates glowed brightly in acceptance of the marker. One down, three to go.

NOTE

I noticed that, with the arc GZMU now calibrated, the arc coordinate on my KI started working, letting me know the distance of my arc from the Great Zero wherever I stood in D'ni. It didn't seem to work outside of D'ni.



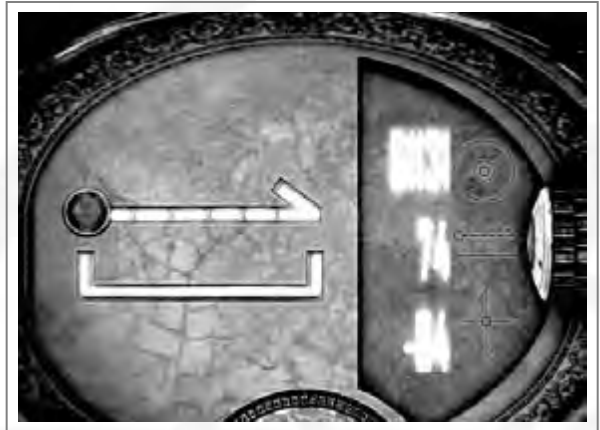
I activated the distance GZMU.

I moved over to the distance GZMU and activated it by pressing the blue button at its center. Once again, I was given three coordinates for the GZMU Marker I had to find. I touched the blue button in the "distance" symbol to start it blinking and activate the GZMU Marker.

NOTE

The coordinates for the distance GZMU Marker are:

- Arc: 61131
- Distance: 74
- Height: -84



I uploaded the distance GZMU Marker.

Once again, I linked to my Relto, then to the Nexus, then to the Great Zero courtyard (Rezeero). I headed back to the distance GZMU and uploaded the marker to it. The distance icon glowed in acceptance of the marker. The distance feature of my KI now worked. Halfway there!

Third GZMU Marker ("Height")



I accessed the height GZMU.

Next, I approached the height GZMU, touched the blue button to activate it, and then looked through the scope to see the "height" GZMU Marker's coordinates. I pressed the blue button in the center of the "height" icon to the left of the coordinates to activate the marker and went in search of it.



I found the "distance" GZMU Marker in the Kadish Tolesa gallery.

After another long search, I found the GZMU Marker in the gallery I'd first visited during my trek through Kadish Tolesa on my first journey. Although I linked directly to the gallery with my Ae'gura Linking Book in my Relto, I could have linked to Kadish Tolesa and used the Linking Book near the beginning of the Age to reach the gallery as well.

NOTE

The coordinates for the height GZMU Marker are:

- Arc: 60143
- Distance: 1001
- Height: -70

Pith Helmet



I found a pith helmet in a cave in Lower Gira.

During a break in my search for the height GZMU Marker, I took a detour to Eder Gira. Linking to the last Journey Cloth I touched there, I found myself in a cavern with a pith helmet by my feet. I'm not a huge fan of the "great white hunter" look, but I picked it up and added it to my Relto anyway.



I found a new Bahro Linking Stone in Eder Kemo.

Finding the height GZMU Marker proved to be the most challenging task so far. I actually gave up for a while and returned to Ages I hadn't revisited. It was in one of these that I found a Bahro Linking Stone that hadn't been there before. Eder Kemo's rotating, levitating sculpture hid the Linking Stone behind it. I wasted no time in using it.



Linking Stone brought me to Bevin and the GZMU Marker.

The Linking Stone brought me to a balcony high above the Bevin Neighborhood, where the height GZMU Marker just happened to be floating. I grabbed the marker and linked back to the Great Zero courtyard via my Relto and the Nexus.

Fourth GZMU Marker



I uploaded the height GZMU Marker.

Upon returning to the GZMUs, I uploaded the height marker, and the height icon in the GZMU glowed after I did so. All three coordinates were now functional on my KI.



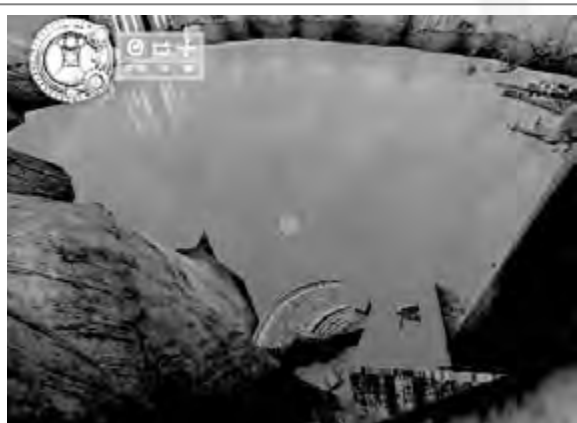
I activated the fourth GZMU.

I activated the fourth GZMU as I did the other three—I pressed the blue button to get a set of coordinates and then pressed the blue button to the left of the coordinates to activate the GZMU Marker.

NOTE

The coordinates for the fourth GZMU Marker are:

- Arc: 57325
- Distance: 110
- Height: -79



I found the fourth and final GZMU Marker off of the side of the library courtyard.

Getting the fourth and final GZMU Marker was easily the most foolhardy thing I'd ever done in my travels through the Ages. It was located off the side of a sheer cliff face in the library courtyard. I had to run off the cliff, touch the GZMU Marker, and then hit the Linking Panel on my Relto Linking Book before I wound up shattered on the rocks below, like poor Phil. Thinking about it later, I probably could have just inched out very carefully to reach it without jumping, but I only had about three seconds worth of courage. Suffice it to say that since you're reading this, I did it, but I'm going to have nightmares about that for weeks.

Calibrating the Great Zero



I returned to the GZMUs and uploaded the fourth marker.

As I'd done three times before, I linked back to my Relto, then to the Nexus, and then to the Great Zero courtyard. I headed over to the fourth GZMU and uploaded the marker.



Great Zero came to life!

As soon as I uploaded the marker, a three-towered structure beyond the GZMUs roared into life. I guessed it to be the Great Zero. It sent a blue stream of energy through the Great Zero calibration machines.



A rune in the shape of a shell?

I decided to follow the beam and see where it led. As I left the Great Zero calibration center, I saw a glowing blue rune in the shape of a shell pulsing overhead. For some reason, it piqued my interest, and I took a picture of it.



Neutrino dispenser activated.

The mammoth crystalline machine known as the neutrino dispenser was operational and slowly revolving in the middle of the Great Zero courtyard. From one end, it shot a thin vertical beam of blue light. At first, I didn't understand what it was doing, but then it made sense: the machine was "reading" the cavern and calibrating itself to D'ni.

As satisfying as it was to see the massive machinery in action, it seemed as if I still had something left to accomplish. I'd calibrated the Great Zero, but I was still no closer to figuring out what had happened to the DRC and the restoration of D'ni.

Stumped, I sat down and reread my notes. When I skimmed back through my copy of Sharper's 2004 journal, something clicked: The coordinate that Zandi had been "sending out" was a KI coordinate! And with the Great Zero calibrated, I could find out what he was talking about!

Zandi's Coordinate

Zandi's Shirt



Zandi wasn't in his Airstream, but his shirt was.

Before I left to discover what Zandi's coordinate referred to, I decided to see if I could talk to the man directly. He had vanished from his Airstream trailer after my last journey, but I hoped to catch him again. I used the leftmost Linking Book in my Relto to visit Tomahna (the rainy Cleft). Zandi wasn't there, but he had left his shirt behind. I took it as a souvenir and added it to my Relto wardrobe.

The Shell Rune



I linked to Tokotah Alley and found coordinate 2175.58.-81.

I began looking for Sharper's coordinate by linking back to Tokotah Alley. I was pleasantly surprised to find that I was near Sharper's coordinate: 2175.58.-81. Unfortunately, it appeared to be beyond the drop-off at the end of the alley.



The neutrino beam came by to reveal the shell rune!

I wasn't feeling up to making another suicidal leap until the Great Zero's neutrino beam happened to pass by. For a brief instant, it outlined the shell rune I had seen in the Great Zero courtyard!



I leapt into the rune.

That gave me enough confidence to risk another dive. With my Relto Linking Book at the ready, I waited for the beam to pass by, then leapt into the rune when it appeared. I felt the link sensation transport me to another place—but where?

Rest Area



I reappeared in a dark room—a rest area?

I reappeared in a small, dark room that looked like a rest area. Directly in front of me was a cot and a lit lantern. Between them was a journal.



Watson's journal!

mount higher. He wanders down through D'ni's caverns and loses himself in thought, trying to find a way to continue his quest for a restoration of D'ni without continuing down the failed pathways of simply reconstructing the city.

Watson winds up arriving in a small rest area halfway between D'ni and the surface, just off of the edge of the Great Shaft, D'ni's abandoned attempt to tunnel up to the surface. It was in this room that Anna rested with her son Gehn on their way up to the surface after the fall of D'ni. It was also here that Gehn rested with his son Atrus on their return to the shattered city.

I put the book down and realized: the room that Watson talked about—it was the room I stood in right now!

I continued reading. Watson realized that he had to shut down the DRC's reconstruction of D'ni, but he didn't view his decision with regret. Instead, he seemed to have felt renewed. He ends by vowing to take Yeesha's journey and encouraging anyone who reads the journal to do the same.



A Yeesha Page in a bunk.

I picked it up and almost dropped it out of shock when I read the cover: "Dr. Watson." This was the journal of the founder of the D'ni Restoration Council! He was here, and I was following his path! My hands trembled as I opened the cover.

The early entries describe Watson's anger and sadness over the senseless death of several explorers and his fear that, with the influx of new adventurers, the toll will only

Having finished rereading and copying Dr. Watson's journal, I made a quick inspection of the rest of the room and found a Yeesha Page in a bunk. I added it to my Linking Book and found that it created a music player in my Relto.

And when did I return to my Relto, you ask? Well, that's a funny story. You see, after I finished exploring the rest area, I decided to take a gander at the exterior, forgetting what was immediately outside the door.



I shafted myself!

Yes, friends, I fell into the Great Shaft. Fortunately, I snapped a few pictures just before panic linking back to my Relto.

And it's here in my Relto that I'm bringing this journal to a close. Zandi revealed the path of the shell to those who would follow it, and I can't resist its call.

I hope to be able to continue my narrative, but if it should end here, let me just say that I journey into the unknown with no regrets. And I hope some of you will follow.



Artifacts of Interest

I found and collected two different categories of things: Yeesha Pages and items of clothing.

Yeesha Pages

Yeesha Pages are pages of the Relto Linking Book that add new features to the Relto when added to the Linking Book. To add a Yeesha Page to the Relto Linking Book, just touch it, and a copy of the page appears in the book.

Once a Yeesha Page has been added to the book, it can be deactivated by opening the book and touching the glowing green image on the page. The image stops glowing, and the feature it creates will no longer be present on the next visit to the Relto. Reactivating a deactivated page is as simple as touching the page's image again.

During my journey I found five Yeesha Pages, which I describe next in the order in which I found them:

Island Page



This page is stuck to the side of a building near the water garden in the Bevin Neighborhood. I found it by heading down flights of stairs until I reached the water garden, then hopping up on a small pedestal near a window. The

Yeesha Page is on the side of the window frame.

Unfortunately, I wasn't able to get a good angle for the photo without running the risk of falling into the water and ruining my camera.

Dock Page



I found this page in an area of Teledahn than I'd never seen before. To reach the page, I had to link from the Nexus room to the ferry terminal, where I found a Bahro Linking Stone that brought me to Teledahn and the Yeesha Page.

Sun and Moons



This Yeesha Page was lying on a podium in the Ae'gura museum. I linked into the Tokotah Alley area of Ae'gura and used the nearby map to find the museum entrance. The Yeesha Page added a sun and two moons to my Relto, which I must admit was pretty mind-blowing when I first saw it. It was one thing for Yeesha's writing to add a few pine trees or a waterfall to my Relto; it was quite another for it to create celestial bodies in the heavens. That was power on a whole other scale.

Imager



OK, this one was really cool. I found the page at the base of the stairs in the Great Zero courtyard (which I reached by following the "Rezeero" link from the Nexus Machine). When I added it to my Linking Book, my Relto acquired an imager that displayed the pictures that I had taken with my KI!

Music Player



I found the final Yeesha Page in the rest area at the end of my journey. To reach the rest area, I had to reactivate the Great Zero, link to Tokotah Alley, and leap into the shell rune when the neutrino beam revealed it. This page added to my Relto a music box that played the tunes of my choosing.

Pieces of Clothing

Several pieces of clothing were left around the Ages (presumably by DRC explorers). I picked these up as I found them, and added them to my Relto's wardrobe. Some weren't exactly my style, but there didn't seem to be much point in just leaving them lying around. I describe them next in the order in which I found them:

Tie-Dye T-Shirt



It was a bit too hippie for me, but I found this T-shirt in Teledahn, in the room above the round room with the metal walkway that led to the Bahro Cave door. This was the same room in which I found the seventh and final Teledahn Journey Cloth during my first journey.

Phil's DRC Vest



The late Phil left his DRC vest in his personal Relto before falling to his untimely demise. To reach Phil's Relto, I discovered the Linking Book to Sharper's spy room in the Teledahn slave caves. I linked to the spy room and used a Linking Book I found there to link to Phil's Relto.

Hard Hat (Orange)



I found several of these orange hard hats on the "Tokotah II" rooftop in Ae'gura Island. The only way to reach the rooftop was with a page from the Ae'gura Linking Book in my Relto. (This page was added after I used a Bahro Linking Stone in Eder Gira during my first journey.)

Hard Hat (White)



On the same Tokotah rooftop as the orange hard hats, I found a single white DRC hard hat, presumably used for supervisors.

Pith Helmet



I stumbled upon this fashionable piece of headwear totally by mistake when I linked into Eder Gira via the last Journey Cloth I touched there. This brought me to a cavern, and the pith helmet was at my feet.

Zandi's Shirt



I wound up traveling to Tomahna (the rainy Cleft) to see if I could find Zandi, but he was nowhere to be found. He did, however, leave his shirt behind. I took it as a memento of the guy who got me into all of this.

PART THREE: PATH OF THE SHELL

MYST[®]

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EXPANSION PACK

The Path of the Shell



The Start of the Path

Return to Relto



Several new books appeared on the shelves of my Relto.

After I had recalibrated the Great Zero during my journey to D'ni, I discovered the start of something that Zandi referred to as "the path of the shell." It was the start of another quest that promised to fulfill the DRC's abandoned dream of a restored D'ni. Exhausted as I was after my last journey, I needed to rest before starting along this path of the shell.

I linked back to my Relto and found seven new books on the shelves. One was a Linking Book; the other six were blue leather-bound journals, each of which bore a stylized face and the symbol of the shell on its cover. Five of the six journals' covers were also numbered with D'ni numerals from 1 to 5.

I sat down to read the volumes. The first was a translation of a journal written by someone who referred to himself only as "the Watcher." The other five journals seemed to be books of prophecy written by the same author.

NOTE

The contents of all six journals are reprinted in their entirety in the "Notes and Journals" section of this book.

The Words of the Watcher

I assumed that it was Yeesha who left the Watcher's books for me to read. Like many of the things Yeesha has shown me, the vast majority of the Watcher's words went straight over my head. However, there were a few points of interest in each journal that might come in handy later, so I distilled the journals into a few quick notes after copying them in their entirety.

Watcher's Journal



The Watcher first received his revelation from the Maker (a.k.a. Yahvo, the D'ni equivalent of God) at the age of 625 D'ni months. The Maker promises the Watcher the gift of prophecy and tells him to watch for the "builders," the "breakers," and the "grower." The Watcher waits for more than 600 months to receive his vision, which he does in the

form of 5 sections of 125-line prophecies, for a total of 625 lines (625 again ... significance?). The Maker tells the Watcher that he will not understand the prophecy, that it is meant for those who come after the Watcher.

Words, Section 1



- The "grower" will be able to link without "bindings" (Linking Books)?
- "Because of tunnels, D'ni has changed forever"—reference to contact with the surface (Atrus' grandmother Anna)?
- There will be a "deceiver" in addition to the "grower." The deceiver seems to be a more obvious, public figure than the grower, who does their work in obscurity.

- "Knowing the least is the path of wisdom"—"least" meaning Bahro?
- References to "seven," of which only four are "seen as they see, for seven is one and one is seven." No idea what this means.

Words, Section 2



- "When destruction comes, other [A]ges will not save you"—sounds like Kadish Tolesa's fate.
- Entreaties to "seek the path of the shell."
- Qualities of the "grower": "bring the gathered," "restore the least," "move through time," "link at will," "follow the shell" ... Yeesha?
- Emphasis on patience—"find solace in the wait," "follow the patient path."
- D'ni will be restored by "a light in the cavern"?
- Repetition of "seven is one and one is seven."

Words, Section 3



- More emphasis on patience: "Wait. If you can be calm, the way is a simple thing to gain."
- "River of blood"—literal? Metaphorical?
- "They will subdue the weak and it will be their undoing"—sounds like Yeesha's take on the fall of D'ni.
- "The wound in the desert (Cleft?) will bring forth the renewal of hope."
- "First there is a one; followed by a nine. Four leads a ten"—what's that supposed to mean?
- "Only the ears of the new ones will hear the true grower"—new what? Those who feel called to D'ni? Is Yeesha the true grower?

Words, Section 4



- "The number of the watcher is six hundred and twenty five"—another reference to 625, the "number of waiting."
- Reference to "desert bird" knowing "when the storm will come," "when the tree will grow"; desert bird will "build a nest in the tree"—Yeesha lived in the desert Cleft for a while....
- "A new five reign"—the DRC?
- "A new one reigns"—Yeesha?

Words, Section 5

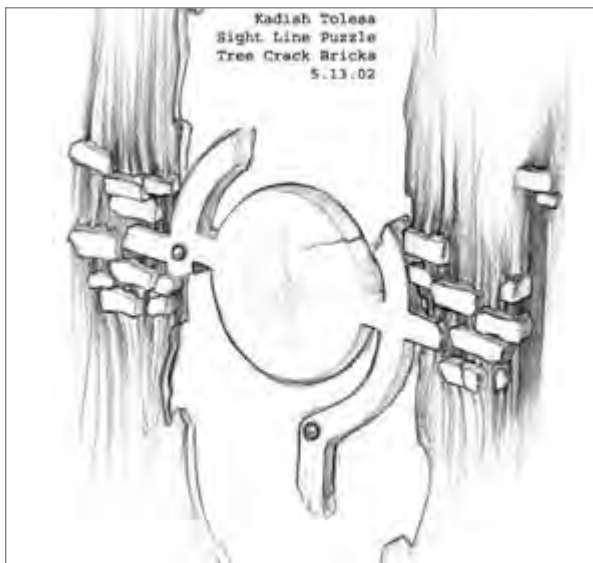


- "The gathered will tell of the path of the shell."
- "The cloth does not burn. The cloth of many; it remains in the fire and produces new life"—reference to the seemingly indestructible Bahro Journey Cloths?
- "The cleft is a blessing to the gathered."
- "Roll the stone to know the deceiver."
- "The burdened one will write to save worlds, and save one"—Atrus?
- "The dreamer will dream to save worlds, and save many"—Catherine?
- References to following a path of light, or the healing power of light abound in these prophecies.
- "But the son of the son (Atrus?) will carry the burden. And his wife (Catherine?) will face the storm. Give him (Atrus?) a pen, and he will plan. Give her (Catherine?) a pen, and she will dream. And a daughter (Yeesha) will carry the burden of her father. And the daughter of the daughter (Yeesha's daughter?) will live in peace."



Another Linking Book on the shelf.

After reading, copying, and doing my best to understand the Watcher's journals, I turned my attention to the shelf of Linking Books. I noticed that someone had marked the tabs of each book slot with an icon that represented its associated journey. The leftmost group of books was marked with a Journey Cloth hand icon to represent my first journey. The middle group was marked with the symbol of the DRC. The single book at the right end of the other bookshelf was new; it was marked with a shell icon. It seemed that this was where my next journey was to begin. I placed my hand on the Linking Panel and transported to a place I would come to know as the Watcher's Sanctuary.



The Watcher's Sanctuary First Floor



Some sort of map, perhaps?

I linked into the Watcher's Sanctuary directly in front of a large imaging device that displayed what seemed to be a rough sketch of a map, with the shell icon below it. Not knowing what to make of it, I took a couple of photographs and resolved to ponder it later. Several other smaller imagers along the walls were powered up but displayed no images. A large staircase led up to the next floor, but I decided to explore my immediate surroundings before going up.

Clothing: Great Tree Fleece Jacket



Great Tree fleece jacket, found on a balcony overlooking the Great Tree.

I walked out onto a nearby balcony and was barely able to make out the trunk of a giant tree in the dim light (I would later discover that it was called the Great Tree by the D'ni). On the railing of the balcony was a fleece jacket bearing an image of the Great Tree on the back of it. Since it was a bit chilly, I picked it up and slipped it on—a perfect fit!

Sanctuary Journal



Journal and Linking Books opposite the Great Tree balcony.

On the opposite side of the first floor was an alcove with two Linking Books and a DRC journal. Leaving the Linking Books aside for the moment, I read the journal, which provided a detailed explanation of the purpose of the Watcher's Sanctuary and its history, as well as the history of the Watcher himself.

NOTE

This entire journal is reprinted in the "Notes and Journals" section of this book.

Watcher's Sanctuary Journal Notes



Not long after the D'ni's arrival in the cavern, they created the Great Tree in the center of the sanctuary as a symbol of their new growth and progress (tree imagery is apparently very common in D'ni literature). The sanctuary itself was built in the 4000s for the Watcher, who is described as a "Nostradamus-type guy" who wrote a book of prophecy called *Words*. The

building itself is in the J'taeri district, one of D'ni's more posh neighborhoods, but there is no way to enter it from the outside without linking into it.

The sanctuary eventually became more of an upper-class lounge, and ownership of it passed through many hands. Kadish Tolesa (creator and owner of the Age of the same name) was the last owner of the sanctuary before the fall of D'ni. His contribution to the sanctuary was a D'ni puzzle called "the path of the shell" that blocks access to the Great Tree. Kadish was apparently the only one able to solve the puzzle (which makes sense), although he boasted that anyone who had read the Watcher's prophecies could do it.

Kadish viewed himself as the Grower spoken of in *Words*, and he did his best to fulfill as many of the prophecies as possible. He brought two Linking Books to the sanctuary; one links to the Age of Er'Caná, and the other to the Age of Ahnonay. Er'Caná was an Age that Kadish had engineered, and Ahnonay was an Age that he claimed to have written for the purpose of allowing himself to travel through time.

After reading the journal, I came to understand that the two Linking Books led to the Ages of Er'Cana and Ahnonay. I didn't use them yet, however. I wanted to see this puzzle that Kadish had installed.

Kadish's Puzzle



Pressed blue button to open the door to the puzzle.

I headed up the stairs and found a single alcove with a closed door and a glowing blue button, similar to the ones seen in the Age of Kadish Tolesa. I pressed the button and the door opened. For a second, I was cocky enough to think that I'd actually solved the puzzle. Then I walked into the next room and saw the actual puzzle.



The puzzle room.

The puzzle room consisted of something that looked like a large, nonoperational clock, a shell floor tile, and a large ball with the Watcher's symbol that blocked access to the pathway to the Great Tree. To the right of the ball was a sign that said "1:4" in Arabic numerals. Peering around the ball, I could see more clocks and turning gears past the ball.



Flipped lever above shell rune.

I stood on the shell rune and flipped a lever above it. The door to the puzzle room closed, and a clinking noise filled the room, repeating at somewhat regular intervals.

I looked around for a clue of what to do next and found nothing. I could push the ball up its track, but it just rolled down after me when I finished, accomplishing nothing. And because there was currently no way out of the room, that meant that there was nothing else to do in here.



To hell with this. Pulled the lever again and left.

Examining every inch of the room didn't take more than a couple minutes, after which, frustration quickly set in. I pulled the lever again; the door opened and the clinking stopped. It was obvious that I needed something else to solve this puzzle, and because I had two Linking Books to explore, I decided to continue my quest by using one of them.

Linking Books



Er'Cana Linking Book—left of journal; image of a canyon.



Ahnonay Linking Book—right of journal; some sort of high-ceilinged vault.

I looked at the two Linking Books near the journal on the first floor. One showed the image of a canyon in its Linking Panel. This, I would learn, was Er'Cana. The other Linking Book linked to Ahnonay, and its Linking Panel showed a small room with high walls. There didn't seem to be any reason to explore one Age before visiting the other one, so after returning to my Relto to drop off the Great Tree fleece jacket I'd found a few minutes earlier, I returned to the Watcher's Sanctuary and used the Er'Cana Linking Book.



Er'Cana



Huge plants at the end of the cavern that I linked into.

My link-in point in Er'Cana was a large canal. Upon arriving, I walked forward until I saw a cluster of enormous plants at the end of the canal.



Looks important, but I don't know what it means.

As I walked around the plants to get a better view of them, I saw a series of lines and squares etched into the canal wall. I didn't know what to make of them, but I'd seen enough D'ni puzzles to know when I was looking at a clue for one of them. I snapped a couple of pictures of the etching, turned around, and walked back the way I came.

Harvester



Enormous piece of machinery (harvester).



Ladder leading up to it.

The narrow canal widened into an open area with a large metal track that curved beyond my line of sight in either direction. I decided to turn right and follow it to the end, where I saw a huge piece of machinery (which I later learned was a harvester of sorts) and a ladder leading up to it, which I climbed.

Fissure



Found a star fissure etched into the rock wall in Er'Cana.

Before I hopped onto the harvester, I explored some more of Er'Cana on foot. I found a giant etching of a star fissure on one of the stone walls in a small natural alcove just past the harvester tracks.



Brushed the etching and wound up in a Bahro Cave.

I touched the etching with my hand and wound up linking into a Bahro Cave. There were three etchings on the walls that looked like sunbursts, as well as a piece of paper that said "5:18" in Arabic numerals. In the center of the floor was a hole that led down into a chamber below, but I wasn't able to drop into it.



Sunburst #1: 30 rays.



Sunburst #2: 20 rays.



Sunburst #3: 40 rays.



"5:18"

I took photos of the three sunbursts, which were only distinguished by the illustrations in the center of them and the number of rays issuing forth from them. With nothing else to do, I linked back to my Relto, where I found a new Linking Book to Er'Cana at the right end of my Linking Book shelf.



Controls: center toggle switch controls forward/backward movement; right lever moves harvester.

I walked around the narrow catwalk to reach a set of controls for the harvester. The left lever didn't seem to do anything, but I discovered that the toggle switch in the middle of the panel determined whether the harvester would move forward or backward and the right lever was the throttle. I pushed the toggle switch forward and pulled the right handle to start the harvester moving forward along the track.



Arrived at an industrial complex.

The wooden walkways between the harvester and the transport car in front of it rose up as the harvester began to move (probably as a safety precaution). The harvester and transport car automatically came to a stop in front of an enormous industrial complex.



Walked to the transport car and pulled lever.

I left the harvester's controls and walked to the front of the transport car. The track continued farther into the complex's cavernous maw. The harvester would never fit in there, but the transport car would. I pulled a lever at the head of the transport car to release it from the harvester and enter the industrial complex.

Industrial Complex

Silo A



Silo A of the industrial complex.



"Shell Cloth"

The transport car docked inside a structure I would come to call Silo A. On one of the wooden pillars that surrounded the metal walkway in front of me was a scrap of cloth with the shell icon on it. I touched it, and the icon glowed, much like the Journey Cloths I found during my first expedition.

NOTE

I would later find that these Shell Cloths worked just like Journey Cloths, in that I could link directly back to the last one I'd touched in an Age by touching the Shell Cloth link in the Age's Linking Book.



Broken bridge that used to lead to a windmill.

After touching the Shell Cloth, I walked around the walkway and out onto a balcony, where I saw a giant

windmill. The bridge leading from the balcony to the windmill was ruined, leaving me nowhere to go except back into Silo A.



Ladder leading down from walkway.

I climbed down a ladder leading from Silo A's walkway to reach a pathway leading back underneath the transport car. Unfortunately, the transport car blocked the way and prevented me from going any farther.



Pulled the transport car's lever and dashed back to walkway.

I returned to the transport car, pulled the lever, and hustled back onto the walkway before the walkway gate closed and the transport car returned to the harvester.

NOTE

Through some trial and error in my journey, I discovered that this trick worked only if the harvester was in front of the industrial complex.

Silo B



Followed pathway at bottom of ladder to bottom of Silo B.

The pathway at the bottom of Silo A's ladder led to another ladder at the bottom of Silo B. I climbed the ladder to reach a catwalk with another power switch, which I used to restore power to Silo B.



Silo B was practically identical to Silo A.

I entered Silo B and climbed a ladder up to its catwalk to discover that Silo B was a near-perfect mirror image of Silo A. I exited Silo B via the door leading out from the catwalk.



I climbed down the ladder to reach transport car's previous location.

With the transport car out of the way, I climbed back down the ladder and saw a second ladder below the transport car's previous location.



Power switch where transport car used to be.

On the wall next to the ladder was a switch. I pulled the switch and restored power to Silo A, and then I descended the ladder.

Grinding Room



Silo B's bridge to the windmill was intact.

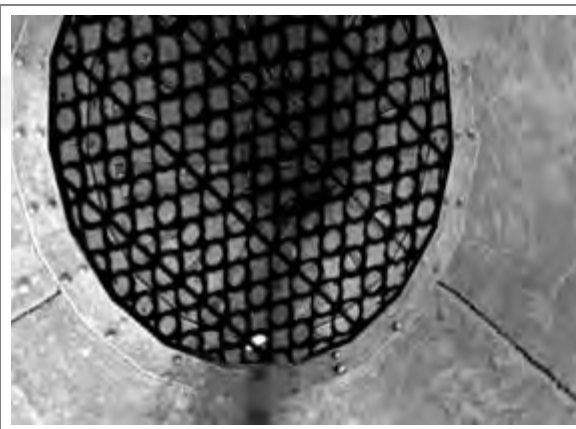
Silo B, like Silo A, had a balcony with a bridge leading to a giant windmill. Unlike Silo A, however, Silo B's bridge was intact. I crossed it and followed the pathway into the grinding room, so named for the three huge stone grinders connected to the windmill's shaft. They harnessed the power of the turning windmill to rotate and crush anything beneath them into a pulp.

I was starting to understand the purpose of Er'Cana. I guessed that the harvesters must have been used to harvest plants or minerals outside the complex. The harvesters would put their cargo in the transport cars, which would bring them to the silos. From the silos, workers could bring them to the grinding room, where the materials would be pulped. This might have been one of D'ni's agricultural Ages, where they could harvest and process the food that couldn't be grown in their dim, subterranean city.



Power switch and Shell Cloth.

I found another power switch and Shell Cloth on the other side of the grinding room. I touched the Shell Cloth to mark my progress and pulled the switch to restore power to the room and activate the grinder.

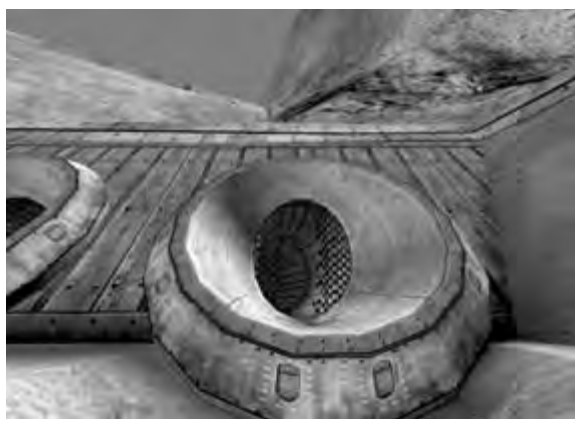


Saw a Yeesha Page I couldn't reach.



Another note on a wall—4:52.

I left the grinding room via the door between the Shell Cloth and the door I'd entered through. In the distance, I saw a small piece of paper affixed to the wall that had "4:52" written on it in Arabic numerals. In a massive grated pipe outside of the grinding room, I saw what looked like a Yeeshia Page, but try as I might, I couldn't get to it. I made a note to return for it and went back into the grinding room.



Walked out the opposite door to reach two more grated pipes.

I walked straight across the grinding room and exited via the door on the opposite side of the room (between the power switch and the door I'd originally entered through). Here I saw two more grated pipes, one of which had a hole torn in its grate. I walked in.



Blocked by a valve.

The end of the pipe was blocked by a giant valve that didn't budge an inch when I tried to move it. Oh well. I returned to the grinding room and went through the only doorway left, the one between the Shell Cloth and power switch.

Control Room



Industrial complex control room.

The door between the Shell Cloth and power switch brought me to the industrial complex control room, a small room dominated by two large imagers projecting schematics of the industrial complex and banks of blinking lights.



Bridge to the next part of the complex was broken.

I climbed a set of stairs leading out of the control room to find that the bridge leading to the next part of the industrial complex was broken. I also saw four large treatment pools, all of which had mixing arms rotating in them.

Four pools. Four grated pipes outside the nearby grinding room, one of which had a Yeesha Page in it. Hmm...

Power Imager



Power imager—shows which parts of the industrial complex have power.

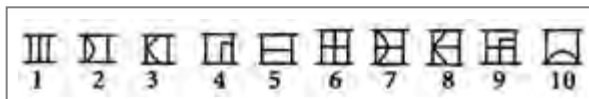
Returning to the control room, I took another look at the two imagers. One showed a zoomed-out diagram of the entire industrial complex, with most of the complex illustrated in light blue. After a while, I figured out that this "power imager" showed which parts of the complex were powered-up. Unpowered sections of the complex were drawn with gray lines. According to the power imager, the only part of the complex that didn't have power running to it was the area beyond the treatment pools.

Power Controls



Treatment pool power controls—blue buttons scroll map.

The other imager provided a zoomed-in view of the industrial complex. I sat down at the controls and touched the glowing blue button at the bottom left of the screen. The map scrolled to the left. I pressed it again, and the map scrolled to show the four treatment pools.



D'ni numbers 1 to 10

Four buttons on the left side of the imager displayed the D'ni numerals 1, 2, 3, and 4. I pressed the 2 switch (second from the top), which brought up three more buttons on the right side of the imager.



Selecting a pool with its D'ni numeral brings up three more controls: mixing arm, hatch, and drain.

After a bit of trial and error, I determined that the three new buttons represented the controls for the treatment pool's mixing arms, hatch, and drain.

Yeesha Page: Fire Marbles



Turned off pool #2's mixing arms, drained it, and opened its hatch.

Once I understood how the controls worked, I used them to reach the Yeesha Page I'd seen earlier. I pressed the button with the D'ni numeral 2 to bring up the controls for the second treatment pool. I turned off pool #2's mixing arms, drained it of water, and opened its hatch by pressing each of its control buttons once.



Walked back out to treatment pools and entered the pool I'd just drained.

With that done, I left the control room, walked up the stairs to the treatment pools, and descended the ladder leading into the pool I'd just drained.



Yeesha Page at the end of the pipe.

I climbed through the pipe at the bottom of the treatment pool to reach the other side of the grate where I'd seen the Yeesha Page. I touched the Page and added it to my Relto Linking Book. When I returned to my Relto, I saw that several D'ni Fire Marbles had appeared in it.

Baking Room



Shut off pool #4's mixing arm, opened the valve, drained the pool.

I figured that I needed to reach the part of the industrial complex beyond the control room, but with the bridge in disrepair, there was no way to cross directly over to it. That's when I remembered the hole in the pipe grating outside of the grinding room. After some experimentation, I realized that the pipe corresponded to the fourth treatment pool, so I shut off the pool's mixing arm, opened its valve, and drained it of water, just as I had done with pool #2.



Returned to hole in pipe grating and walked through to the end—valve was open.

This allowed me to return to the pipe with the hole in its grating and walk through it to reach the floor of the fourth treatment pool. I climbed the ladder leading up to the catwalk above the pool.



Entrance to baking room.

Treatment pool #4's pipe provided me with an alternative way to reach the structure beyond the control room, which I came to call the baking room.

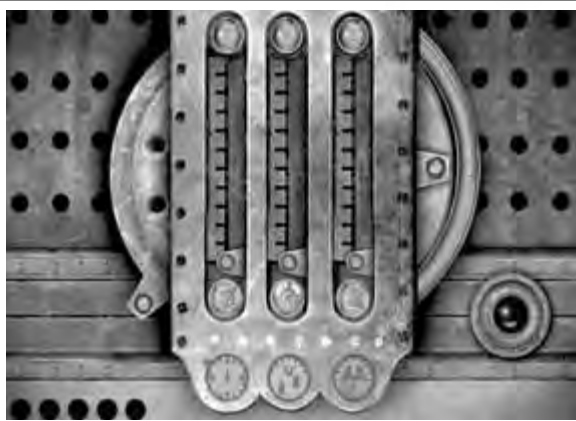


Baking room power switch.

I found the baking room's power switch on the right side of the entrance to the room. Flipping it caused the machinery in the room to hum with activity.



Elevator switch.



Periscope showed some sort of gauge—why do those markings look familiar?

A white button in the center of the room elevated the entire central walkway and returned it to ground level. Four periscopes around the room displayed gauges that I didn't immediately understand, although they did look very familiar.



Rubble and another broken bridge past baking room.

I decided to try and explore further before messing around with the devices in the baking room, but the bridge beyond the baking room had collapsed, and rubble blocked my path. I would have to solve the baking room's riddle to proceed.

Raising the Walkway



Platforms above walkway prevented it from rising.

After raising and lowering the central walkway a few times, I realized that it was getting caught on two of the four platforms above it. The blocking platforms were directly above periscopes that had glowing red lights, indicating that they were powered on.

I tried playing around with the gauges that I could see through the powered-on periscopes, but they didn't seem to have any effect on the platforms.



Returned to control room's power controls to view baking room.

After exhausting my options in the baking room, I backtracked to the control room and used the power controls to view the baking room. The two platforms blocking the rise of the baking room's central platform were colored yellow on the screen, indicating that they were powered on.



Turned off platforms 1 and 4.

I shut off power to the two platforms by pressing the D'ni numerals that corresponded to them (numbers 1 and 4) and by pressing the yellow power button on the right side of the imager.



Returned to baking room—walkway rose all the way up this time.

With power to all four platforms shut off, I returned to the baking room and elevated the central walkway. This time, the walkway rose all the way up, giving me access to two new doorways.

Clothing: Backpack



Doors led to elevated walkway.

Both doors led to the same walkway outside of the baking room, which overlooked a stunning vista. At the end of the walkway was a ladder leading down into a dark shaft.



Backpack lying on the ground at end of path.

I found a backpack lying on the ground at the end of the pathway, which must have been left behind recently by a DRC explorer. I picked it up and put it on, and then I descended the nearby ladder.

Pellet Room



Shell Cloth and broken bridge to baking room.

Turning right at the bottom of the ladder brought me to a Shell Cloth (which I touched) and the rubble on the other side of the broken bridge to the baking room.



Shoved debris into gap in bridge to create a path.

The rubble looked large enough to plug the gap in the bridge, so I tried pushing it. Apparently, my long hours at the gym paid off, because the chunk of debris reluctantly rolled into position and created a makeshift bridge to the baking room.



Baking room's walkway still elevated.

I walked into the baking room and realized that I'd left the central walkway in the elevated position, which prevented me from being able to cross the baking room. I decided to backtrack up the ladder I'd just descended and return to the upper part of the baking room to lower the central walkway again.



Pressed the walkway button to lower it.

I pressed the button on the central walkway to lower it, and then I headed back across the makeshift bridge to enter the pellet room. Along the way, I saw another slip of paper on the wall of the walkway; this one said "4:10" in Arabic numerals.



Another piece of paper with numerals (time?) written on it.



The pellet room.

The small room I later dubbed the pellet room was illuminated from below with an orange glow. Looking over the side of the walkway, I saw that the pool of water below me was filled with the same glowing algae that illuminated D'ni's cavern lake before the fall of the city.

It was then that I realized that the industrial complex wasn't designed to create food for the D'ni—it was designed to create food for the city's lake algae. I remembered that Er'Cana was an Age that Kadish Tolesa had engineered, which made sense. One of the prophecies about the Grower was that he (or she) would illuminate D'ni; this might have been Kadish's overly literal attempt to fulfill that prophecy.



A Linking Book and Linking Stone.

In the center of the pellet room was a Bahro Linking Stone that linked to the Bahro Cave I'd reached earlier from the star fissure etching; I had to use my Relto book to leave the Bahro Cave and the Shell Cloth in my Er'Cana Linking Book to return to the industrial complex.

Next to the Linking Stone was a Linking Book. I didn't recognize the image on the Linking Book's Linking Panel, but I found later that it linked to a silo structure in D'ni known as Uran.

The machinery in the pellet room—an unlit blue button and a lever—didn't seem to work. I decided to return to the control room to see if the room was powered up.



Powered up all four platforms in baking room.

The power imager showed that electricity was flowing to the pellet room, so that wasn't the key. I remembered that I'd shut off the power to the platforms in the baking room, so I turned them all back on to see if that would accomplish anything.



All four periscopes lit.

Restoring power to the baking room platforms (specifically, the periscopes and machines below them) didn't seem to change anything in the pellet room. Maybe something needed to happen in the baking room first? Judging from their location, the baking room and pellet room were obviously the last two steps in processing the materials brought to the industrial complex by the harvester and transport car, and I hadn't used the baking room machines yet.



Used the sunburst patterns in the Bahro Cave to set the gauges—from right to left: 40, 30, 20.

I peered through each of the baking room's four periscopes and suddenly recognized the three gauge icons—they were the same icons as the ones in the center of the Bahro Cave's sunbursts! Above each icon was a slider that could be set to a value from 0 to 50. Matching the

number of rays on each sunburst pattern to the gauge it corresponded to, I set each of the four sets of three gauges to 40, 30, and 20 (from left to right). After setting all four gauges, I pressed the yellow button in the lower right corner of the last gauge to start the machines.

NOTE

I eventually deciphered the meanings of the three gauges. From left to right, they represented time, amount, and temperature.



Machines were ovens, each cooking a different material.

After I set all four periscopes gauges, the machines began to hum and radiate heat. It was then that I realized that the devices were ovens, each baking a different ingredient.



Returned to pellet room to escape the heat; light lit up when baking was done.

As the baking room heated up, I returned to the pellet room to wait for the ingredients to finish cooking. It took about 15 minutes. A tab on the left side of each gauge slowly

ticked down the minutes until the baking was complete. When the ovens had finished their task, the blue button in the center of the pellet room illuminated.

Killing Time

It took about 15 minutes for the baking room ovens to finish preparing their materials, so while they went about their tasks, I decided to link to Ages I'd previously explored and see if anything had changed.

Clothing: Maintainer's Suit



Stood in this machine, which automatically fit me with a Maintainer's Suit.

I returned to the training center in Gahreesen (the second, larger building I entered during my first journey). In one of the two rooms that displayed Maintainer Suits, I found a machine illuminated with green lights. While exploring the machine, I stepped into it and got the shock of my life when it roared into activity. Fortunately, all it did was fit me with a Maintainer's Suit.

I returned to my Relto later to change out of it, but I was disappointed to find that there was no room in the closet to store it. However, I realized I could always return to the Gahreesen training facility to get another one if I wanted it.

Clothing: D'ni Goggles



Found a pair of Atrus' D'ni Goggles in his bedroom in the Cleft.

I periodically returned to the Cleft during my journey to e-mail new journal entries to my publisher. During one of my visits, I spotted a pair of D'ni Goggles in Atrus' old bedroom in the Cleft, the same one that contained his note to Yeesha. I wonder if these are actually Atrus' goggles?

Return to Er'Cana



After I collected both items of clothing, I was able to link directly back to Er'Cana's baking room by using the Shell Cloth link in the Er'Cana Linking Book that had appeared in my Relto.



Five pellets in the pellet room machine

When the baking room ovens were done, I pressed the illuminated blue button in the pellet room. The machinery spun around and opened to reveal five pellets and another blue button.



Pressing the blue button extracted a pellet.

Pressing the blue button removed one of the pellets and placed it in a clamp. After about ten seconds, the clamp released, and the pellet fell into the water below. I extracted another pellet and held it while using the Linking Book in the pellet room.



Machinery in Uran scanned pellet.

The Linking Book brought me to Uran, a silo in D'ni. The machinery near the link-in point scanned the pellet and dropped it into the water, where it made a bright white glow. A nearby Linking Book brought me back to Er'Cana's pellet room.



Linked to the Bahro Cave with a pellet.

Next, I tried linking to the Bahro Cave with a pellet by touching the Linking Stone after grabbing a pellet. I arrived in the cave and dropped the pellet through a hole in the center of the floor and into the chamber below. I couldn't see exactly what was underneath me, but the reflected light was a clue that there was water down there. Again, the pellet gave off the same bright light.

I returned to the pellet room by linking back to my Relto and then using my Er'Cana Linking Book's Shell Cloth link. There were still two pellets remaining in the dispenser. I resolved to leave them until I knew what they were for, since it took so long to bake up a new batch.

Bad Pellets



Improperly setting the gauges results in different (though less illuminating) pellets.

After further experimentation with the pellets, I found that if I dramatically changed the values of the gauges before baking a batch of pellets, I'd wind up with pellets that produced only a murky black cloud when dropped in the water below Uran. Obviously, these pellets weren't any good in terms of illumination, so I pulled the lever to the right of the pellet dispenser to dump them all.

Having activated all of the machinery in the industrial complex, created a batch of glowing pellets, and investigated as much of Er'Cana as I could, I was satisfied that I'd done everything I could do in Er'Cana. I returned to my Relto for a much-needed rest before continuing on my journey.



Ahnonay

Ahnonay Temple



Used the other Linking Book in the Watcher's Sanctuary.

Having thoroughly explored Er'Cana, there was nowhere else to go except back to the Watcher's Sanctuary and the Ahnonay Linking Book. I placed my hand on the Linking Panel and linked to Ahnonay.



Link-in point: Ahnonay Temple

My link-in point was a high-ceilinged alcove of Ahnonay Temple, a hub of sorts for the areas I would visit in Ahnonay. I walked forward and two doors opened automatically, revealing a hallway leading to a Linking Book.

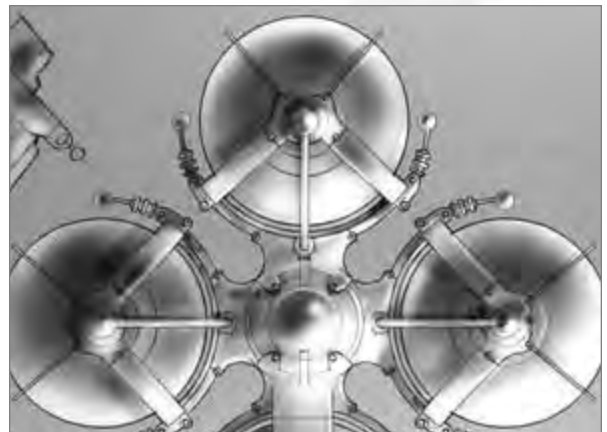


Linking Book at end of hallway.

The hallway was lined with stained-glass images similar to the ones I saw in Kadish Tolesa's gallery during my first journey. I remembered Simpson's journal and recalled that Ahnonay was an Age that Kadish designed to show off his alleged ability to travel through time, fulfilling another of the Watcher's prophecies. I used the Linking Book at the end of the hallway, wondering where—and when—I'd link to.

NOTE

The following account of my travels through Ahnonay was written after I'd completed my quest. There was a great deal of trial-and-error involved in this perplexing Age. *Anyone wishing to retrace my steps must follow the subsequent account of my journey to the letter.*



First Sphere

The reason I refer to this area as the "first sphere" of Ahnonay will become clear by the end of the journey. The repeating motif of the four spheres in the Ahnonay Temple is a clue....



The barren landscape of Ahnonay.

I arrived on the rocky shore of a small island, in the center of which stood an object that looked like a clock. In the distance, I saw other islands surrounding the one I'd arrived on.



Shell Cloth halfway around island.

I walked around the C-shaped island and found a Shell Cloth halfway to the other end of it; I touched it to mark my progress.



Linking Book to Ahnonay Temple; clock face, with small blue lights around it.

I walked to the other edge of the island to find a Linking Book that seemed to lead back to Ahnonay Temple. Standing in front of the Linking Book, I was also able to get a better view of the clock, noting that it had several small blue lights around its circumference. A few of the lights were dimmed.



Went for a little swim—unintentionally.

As I tried to get closer to the clock, I slipped and fell into the water of the island's lagoon. Fortunately, all of my equipment was securely stowed in waterproof cases. I swam around in the lagoon for a few minutes, noting the strong pull of the current. I climbed out of the lagoon on the side of the island near the Shell Cloth and Linking Book.



"Quabs"

As I pulled myself to shore, I startled several of the crablike creatures on the island into the water (I later found that these beasts had been named "Quabs" by some clever DRC researcher). To warm the chill from my bones, I amused myself by chasing several Quabs into the lagoon.



Lights on the clock turned off—each one represented a Quab.

After chasing off a half-dozen Quabs, I looked back at the clock and noticed that several of the blue lights had turned off. It took me a few minutes to realize that the lights were actually a representation of the Quabs on the island, and each Quab I chased into the lagoon turned off one of the lights.

NOTE One of the lights represented my current location as well.



Managed to chase off the Quabs.

I took a few minutes and chased the rest of the Quabs off of the island; it seemed as if there was one left on a smaller separate island that featured a large stone hut. I didn't know at the time what (if anything) this would accomplish, but I had the gut feeling that it was part of some sort of puzzle.



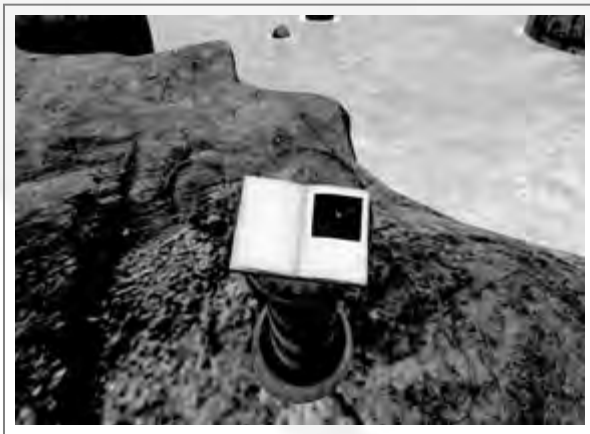
Leaped off of rocks at back side of island to reach tall stone hut.

Following a pathway to the back of the island just past the Shell Cloth, I leaped onto two large rocks jutting up from the water. From the second of these two rocks, I leapt into the water away from the island and fought the current to reach a tall stone hut in the distance.



Another one of those line-and-box maps—third one I'd found.

I was slightly disappointed to find that there seemed to be no way to enter the stone hut, but the exhausting swim wasn't a total loss, as I found another one of those line-and-box etchings on the side of the hut. I still had no idea what it meant, but I knew a puzzle clue when I saw one ... even if I didn't know what the puzzle was.



Made sure all clock lights were out, then used Linking Book on island.

After clearing all of the Quabs off of the island and making sure that there were no blue lights lit on the clock face (except for the one that represented my current position), I used the island's Linking Book to return to Ahnonay Temple.



From Ahnonay Temple, I used the Linking Book to return to Ahnonay.

Once I returned to Ahnonay Temple, I used the Linking Book at the end of the hallway to return to Ahnonay, but I was shocked to see where I wound up.

Second Sphere



Ahnonay had changed—was this the time travel that Kadish boasted of?

When I linked back to Ahnonay via the Ahnonay Temple Linking Book, I arrived in what seemed to be the same place but in a radically different era. The sky was clouded over, with bolts of lightning streaking across the horizon. A thick fog rolled where clear blue water flowed just a few minutes ago.



Fragile crystal Ning trees replaced the Quabs.

The clock still stood in the center of the island, and the blue lights still dotted the circumference of the clock face. However, instead of Quabs, this version of the island was lined with crystal trees (called Ning trees, I found out later). The Ning trees were unbelievably brittle, and the slightest touch caused them to disintegrate into a glittering dust.



Shattering Ning trees caused the clock lights to go out.

After accidentally shattering a few Ning trees, I saw that each one I destroyed turned off one of the clock lights. So, just as I had chased Quabs off the island previously, I shattered all of the Ning trees to turn off all of the clock's lights, except the one that represented my current position on the island.



Followed a pathway to the stone hut under the fog.

As I ran around the island smashing Ning trees, I saw the faint outline of a pathway under the fog that led out to the stone hut. I took a small leap of faith and followed it to the hut.



Shell Cloth on side of hut.

The pathway brought me to the steps leading up the side of the stone hut. At the top of the steps was a Shell Cloth, which I touched to mark my progress in this version of Ahnonay. The line-and-box etching was absent from this version of the stone hut, but there was a final Ning tree along the side of it.



Used the island Linking Book to link to Ahnonay Temple; used Temple Linking Book to link to Ahnonay.

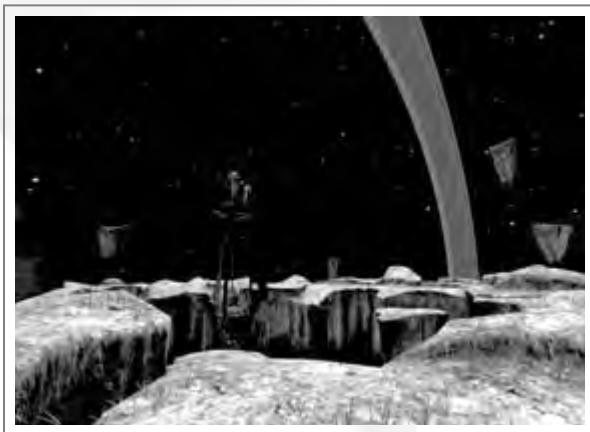
Once all of the Ning trees had been shattered, I used the Linking Book on the island to link back to Ahnonay Temple. From the temple, I linked back to Ahnonay. After my experience with spheres one and two, I expected something different this time, and I wasn't disappointed.



Ahnonay Temple and Ahnonay Linking Books had appeared on the shelf.

I saw that two new Linking Books had appeared on the right end of my Relto Linking Book shelf: an Ahnonay Temple Linking Book and an Ahnonay Linking Book. The main panel on the Ahnonay Linking Book showed the link-in point of Ahnonay, but I decided to use the Shell Cloth panel instead.

Third Sphere



Ahnonay had been completely destroyed.

Arriving in the third sphere of Ahnonay, I saw an Age that looked as if it had been completely destroyed. Compared to the third sphere, the second sphere looked like a lush paradise. I quickly used my Relto Linking Book to return to my Relto.



New Shell Cloth on what used to be hut island.

The Shell Cloth link brought me back to Ahnonay's devastated third sphere, to the location where the stone hut used to be in spheres one and two. The hut was obliterated in the third sphere, and there was no way off of its tiny island. However, there was a new Shell Cloth on what remained of the island. I touched it and used my Relto Linking Book.



Returned to Ahnonay Temple and used Linking Book to return to Ahnonay's third sphere.

I linked back to Ahnonay Temple and used its Linking Book to return to Ahnonay's ruined third sphere. Traveling around the island, I found another Ahnonay Temple Linking Book in the same location that I'd seen it in the two previous spheres.

NOTE

I could have just used the main panel of the Ahnonay Linking Book to link directly back to Ahnonay and skip the Temple altogether; it would have accomplished the same goal. But something kept drawing me back to the Temple. I had the feeling there was a clue staring me right in the face, but I couldn't see it.



Touched the Linking Panel to return to Ahnonay Temple; used its Linking Book to return to the first sphere.

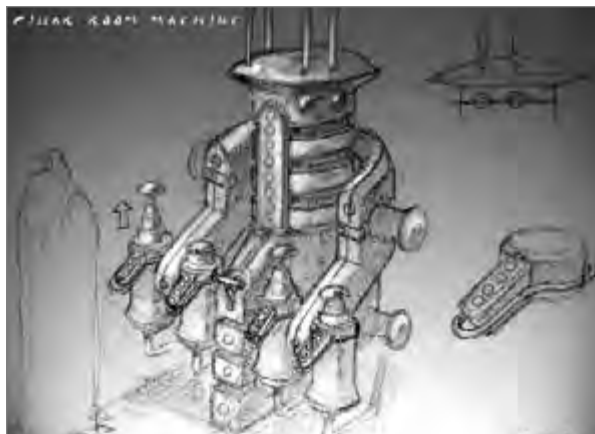
Using the Ahnonay Linking Book brought me back to the Ahnonay Temple. I used the Ahnonay Temple Linking Book to return to the first sphere of Ahnonay.

I was starting to understand how Ahnonay worked: Using the Linking Book on the island pedestal when all of the clock lights were off transported me to the Ahnonay Temple and rotated the spheres. Linking away from Ahnonay with my Relto book did *not* rotate them. Touching the Shell Cloth link in my Ahnonay Linking Book in my Relto brought me back to that location in the last Ahnonay sphere I'd visited.



Returned to Relto and used the Shell Cloth link in the Ahnonay Linking Book.

That gave me an idea: I'd touched a Shell Cloth in the third sphere that seemed to be located where the inside of the stone hut would have been in the first sphere. Perhaps by using the Shell Cloth link in the Ahnonay Linking Book in my Relto, I could appear inside the hut on the first sphere.



Ahnnonay Exposed



Appeared inside hut on first sphere.

My plan worked; by using the Shell Cloth link in the Ahnnonay Linking Book, I linked into the inside of the hut in the first sphere. I climbed a nearby ladder to reach a window, through which I could see the exterior of the first sphere of Ahnnonay.



Turned valve to my left.

I climbed back down the ladder. To my left was a large valve wheel, which I turned. I heard the sound of water jets outside the hut coming to a stop.



Flipped other switch.

Next to the valve wheel was another switch; when I flipped it, I heard and felt the deep rumble of some huge mechanism roaring to life. After a few seconds, it came to a stop; I was eager to see what I'd done.



Opened door and stepped outside.

There was only one other switch in the hut, and it was on the wall opposite the valve wheel. I pulled it to open a door and exited the hut.



Current was turned off; I could swim around to see the "3:72" sign.

Turning the valve wheel apparently shut off the strong current of the water, because I was now able to swim around the first sphere with no trouble. One of the first things I saw was a sign at the base of the hut that said "3:72" in Arabic numerals.

NOTE

I still had no idea what these signs meant, but this sign established that they didn't refer to time. The D'ni might not have had 60-minute hours, but they wouldn't be writing their times in Arabic numerals either.



Ahnonay was a sham—found a passage behind a prop.

As I swam around, I suddenly realized that Ahnonay was a carefully constructed sham. The islands in the distance were nothing but realistic projections on nearly invisible screens. Behind one of the fake islands was what looked like a crack in the sky and a tunnel that led out of the sphere. I swam through the tunnel.



Ahnonay maintenance room.

The tunnel led to the maintenance room of sphere one. The same four-sphere illustration I'd seen in Ahnonay Temple appeared on the wall of the maintenance room as well, with the D'ni numeral 1 in the center of it.



Followed maintenance room pathway through open door.

I climbed up out of the water with the aid of a lowered metal plank and went through the open door beyond it. This brought me past a locked door that I could not open at the present time.

NOTE There is a switch to the left of the locked door. Do not pull it at this point.



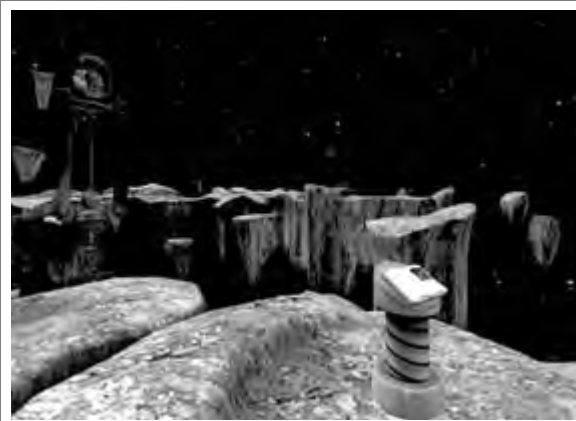
Found a Shell Cloth at the end of the hallway.

I continued down the hallway to find a Shell Cloth at the end of it. I touched the Shell Cloth to mark my progress.



Swam back to island and used Ahnonay Temple Linking Book.

With nothing else to do in the maintenance room, I swam back to the main island and used its Linking Book to return to Ahnonay Temple.



Kept using island and temple Linking Books to reach first sphere again.

From Ahnonay Temple, I linked to the second sphere. I used the second sphere's island Linking Book to travel back to Ahnonay Temple again, where I used the temple Linking Book to link to the third sphere. Finally, I used the third sphere's island Linking Book to link back to the temple and use its Linking Book to link into the first sphere again.

Fourth Sphere



Linked back to Relto and used Shell Cloth link to reach fourth sphere's maintenance room.

After returning to the first sphere via the Ahnonay Temple Linking Book, I used my Relto Linking Book to return to my Relto. From there, I used the Shell Cloth link in my Ahnonay Linking Book to reach the maintenance room of the fourth sphere. The D'ni numeral 4 in the center of the four-sphere design on the wall confirmed it.



"2:30"

I found another one of those Arabic numeral signs in the main part of the fourth sphere's maintenance room. This one read "2:30."



Pulled the switch to the left of the locked door.

There was a locked door in the fourth sphere's maintenance room, just as there was in the first sphere's. I pulled the switch to the left of the door and heard the deafening rumble of heavy machinery.



Door opened.

Just when I thought I couldn't endure any more of the noise, it came to an abrupt stop, and the locked door swung open, revealing a passageway. I wasted no time in following this new path.



Projection of the current sphere: a gaudy statue of Kadish Tolesa.

At the end of the pathway was an imager that projected a view of the current sphere. I saw that the fourth sphere of Ahnonay held nothing but an enormous statue of Kadish Tolesa. Pretty tacky.



Climbed down ladder from path to reach a chair with a button.

Two ladders reached down from the pathway to an area below. Both of them led to a simple chair with a Shell Cloth next to it. I touched the Shell Cloth and sat down in the chair.



Chair took me for a wild ride!

Without warning, the chair sunk into the floor and whisked me through an underground tunnel. It came to a stop at the bottom of what I assumed was sphere one, as I saw water cascading down in front of me.



Upper vertical switch: eject. Lower vertical switch: turn 180°. Lower horizontal switch: throttle.

This device (which I later found out was called a Vogandola) had three controls. Above me was a vertical lever that would eject me from the machine. To the left was another vertical switch that rotated the Vogandola 180 degrees. To the right was a horizontal throttle switch. I pulled the throttle to continue along to my next stop.



Kept pulling the throttle until I arrived at a dead end.

Eventually, I reached a dead end marked with six red lights. I took this as my cue to pull the eject handle. The Vogandola chair rose up and brought me to a new hallway.



"5:57" sign and Watcher's Sanctuary clothing.

At the end of the hallway, I found a shirt embroidered with the icon of the Watcher's Sanctuary. I picked it up and tried it on; it was a perfect fit, and a great addition to my Relto. Next to the clothing was another sign: "5:57."



Locked door and control panel.

On the other side of the room was a control panel with eight familiar icons on it; I'd seen them in various parts of the Kadish Tolesa Age and in the Ahnonay Temple. A massive locked door dominated the end of the hallway.



Pressed the buttons in the order the icons appeared in Ahnonay Temple.

After puzzling out the rotation of Ahnonay's spheres, this puzzle wasn't very difficult at all. I consulted my notes on Ahnonay Temple and saw that all eight symbols on the control panel were also found in the temple's hallway. I pressed the buttons in the order they appeared in the temple hallway, and the door opened.



D'ni clock? Stopwatch?

I went through the door and saw what looked like a D'ni clock or stopwatch to the entrance's right. I realized later that it ticked off cycles of 625 D'ni seconds.



Diagram of Bahro Cave?

Next to the stopwatch was a sketch of what looked like the Bahro Cave that I'd seen previously. A clock icon on the left side of it had the number 625 in the center of it. What did that mean?



Shell Cloth—touched it to mark my progress.

There was another Shell Cloth just past the Bahro Cave sketch. I touched it to save my progress.



A button opened the window to see spheres.

Continuing along the outer wall of the round room, I found a button that opened the room's window shutters. From one of the windows, I got a great view of the four spheres of Ahnonay. It was only at this point that I realized how Ahnonay was designed:

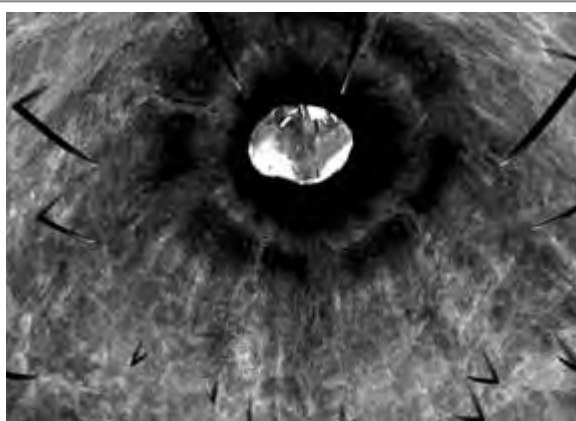
To fulfill the Watcher's prophecy of the Grower, Kadish had designed an Age that made it look as if he were able to travel back and forth through different time periods. By rotating the spheres, Kadish made the same link-in point from the Ahnonay Temple Linking Book appear to lead to different eras. It was an incredible feat of engineering, and while it did prove that Kadish was a charlatan, it also proved that he was an ingenious one.

Bahro Cave (Lower)



Bahro Linking Stone brought me to lower half of Bahro Cave.

There was a Bahro Linking Stone in the middle of the room. Touching it brought me to the lower half of the Bahro Cave.



The lower half of the Bahro Cave.

The lower half of the Bahro Cave did indeed have a pool of water in the center of it, as I'd guessed. A piece of paper on the wall read "5:32."



Couldn't quite make out this line-and-box etching.

There was also another one of those line-and-box engravings, but it was too dim to read in the cave. I needed more light....



Returned to Er'Cana and dropped a pellet from the upper Bahro Cave.

I thought that perhaps if I returned to Er'Cana and dropped a pellet down the hole in the upper part of the Bahro Cave, I might be able to return to the lower part quickly enough to take advantage of the glow and see the line-and-box etching.



Didn't catch the glow, and didn't see any residue or ripples either.

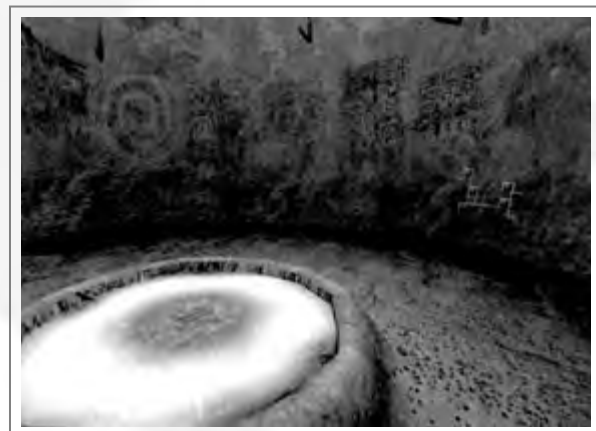
After dropping the pellet, I used my Relto Linking Book to return to my Relto, where I used the Shell Cloth link in my Ahnonay Linking Book. This brought me to the final room of Ahnonay, where I used the Linking Stone to return

to the lower part of the Bahro Cave. Even though it couldn't have been more than 30 seconds since I'd dropped the pellet, I didn't see the glow, nor did I see any residue of the pellet or any ripples from its fall.

I'd been exploring nonstop for hours, and I decided to take a quick break and try to puzzle out the meaning of the signs I'd seen scattered around during my journey. They weren't times, but what else used a notation with two numbers separated by a colon? Were they supposed to be ratios? If so, what was the point of them?

Then it hit me: They were chapters and verses. None of the first numbers on any of the signs were higher than 5—they must refer to the five volumes of the Watcher's prophecies!

The sign in the lower Bahro Cave read "5:32." I consulted my notes in the dim light of the cave and saw that verse 32 in section 5 of the Watcher's prophecy read: "Roll the stone to see the deceiver." A reference to the puzzle Kadish had created in the Watcher's Sanctuary, perhaps?



Pellet fell from the ceiling 14.5 minutes after I dropped it—625 D'ni seconds.

As I pondered the Watcher's prophecies, I saw a hand above me drop a pellet into the lower Bahro Cave. I was so shocked that I almost forgot to take a picture of the line-and-box etching before the white glow faded.



Illuminated line-and-box etching.

I called up to whoever was above me, but there was no response. Looking at my watch, I saw that 14.5 minutes had elapsed since I dropped the pellet into the lower Bahro Cave. That was roughly the equivalent of 625 D'ni seconds—so that's what the sketch in the room with the Bahro Stone meant. The lower Bahro Cave was separated from the upper cave by 625 seconds. Traveling between the two halves of the Bahro Cave was actually a journey through time.

Kadish had gone to great lengths to design an Age that gave the illusion of time travel, but Yeesha and her Bahro Stones were the real deal. It was at this point that I became convinced that Yeesha was the prophesied Grower.

I returned to my notes on the one puzzle I hadn't solved: the ball puzzle Kadish had designed in the Watcher's Sanctuary. According to my notes, it had a sign reading "1:4" on the wall next to it. Section 1, verse 4 of the Watcher's prophecy read: "The door lies at the end of the path." I decided to return to the sanctuary and investigate further.

Yeesha Page

During my mind-bending escapades in Ahnonay's four spheres, I discovered that there was a Yeesha Page in the second sphere's maintenance room. Unfortunately, it was on the other side of a locked door. Getting to it was a bit tricky; here's how I did it:

NOTE

These instructions apply only to an explorer who has reached the end of the Ahnonay journey; the spheres must be in their final position for this to work.



Returned to Relto, used Ahnonay Temple Linking Book to reach sphere 4.

From the end of my Ahnonay journey, I linked back to my Relto. I used the Ahnonay Temple Linking Book to enter the exterior part of the unfinished fourth

sphere, which was dominated by a mammoth statue of Kadish Tolesa. There was a Linking Book on this sphere's "island" as well, and I used it to link to the Ahnonay Temple (and rotate Ahnonay's spheres so that I could link back into the first sphere).



Linked to sphere 1 from temple, swam to maintenance room, touched Shell Cloth.

I returned to the first sphere and swam out to the maintenance room, where I touched the Shell Cloth on the wall of the main part of the maintenance room.



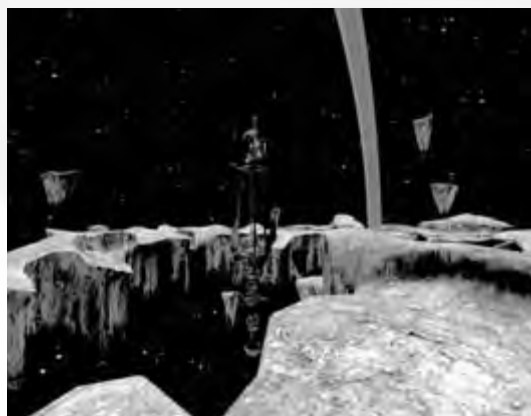
Used sphere 1's island Linking Book to return to sphere 2.

After touching the Shell Cloth, I returned to the main island on sphere 1 and used the island Linking Book to return to the Ahnonay Temple. From there, I linked to sphere 2 with the temple Linking Book.



Sphere 2's maintenance room held the Yeesha Page.

From sphere 2, I returned to my Relto and used the Shell Cloth link in my Ahnonay Linking Book to link to sphere 2's maintenance room. Only one of the two doors in the main part of sphere 2's maintenance room was open. Behind the locked door was the Yeesha Page. I touched the Shell Cloth next to the locked door and linked back to my Relto.



Returned to sphere three.

From my Relto, I used the Ahnonay Temple Linking Book to return to the temple. I used the temple's Linking Book to return to sphere 3 and then used sphere 2's island Linking Book to return to the temple. Using the temple's Linking Book brought me back to the third sphere of Ahnonay.



Linked to sphere 3's maintenance room.

From the third sphere, I linked back to my Relto and used the Shell Cloth link in my Ahnonay Linking Book to reach the third sphere's maintenance room, where I touched the nearby Shell Cloth before linking back to my Relto.



Used island and temple Linking Books to return to sphere 2.

I then used the island and temple Linking Books to get myself back to the second sphere of Ahnonay. When I reached the second sphere, I linked back to my Relto with my Relto Linking Book.

This link brought me to the other side of the locked door in the second sphere's maintenance room. I picked up the Yeesha Page, which gave me a clock on one of the islands in my Relto.

The End of the Path

The Watcher's Sanctuary



Verse 1:4—"The door lies at the end of the path."

I returned to the Watcher's Sanctuary on a hunch. My time in the lower Bahro Cave gave me an idea of how to solve the ball puzzle in the Watcher's Sanctuary. If my hunch was right, I could have solved this riddle from the beginning. Kadish himself said that anyone who had paid attention to the Watcher's prophecies could get past the puzzle.



Pushed the ball up to the end of its track—nothing.

I started out by examining the ball itself, although I suspected that the ball was a red herring. Kadish was skilled in the art of misdirection, and this was too obvious to be a part of the actual solution. I pushed the ball to the end of its path, where it stopped and wouldn't move any farther. I couldn't get around it and couldn't climb over it, so I jogged back down the path to the puzzle room. The ball followed and returned to its original position.



Pulled the switch in the corner and stood in the light.

No, the ball wasn't the key. I pulled the switch in the corner, and a bright light shone down on me. The Watcher emphasized patience, which had been the key to creating the glowing pellets and to using them in the Bahro Cave to illuminate the line-and-box engraving. I decided to see what, if anything, would happen if I simply stood in the light for ... about 625 D'ni seconds.

The Watcher's Prophecies

While waiting in the ball puzzle room, I went back through my travelogues to see which of the Watcher's prophecies had appeared during my journey and when:

- 1:4 (Watcher's Sanctuary, ball puzzle room):
"The door lies at the end of the path."
- 5:18 (Upper Bahro Cave): "The gathered will find rest when the light comes."
- 4:52 (Er'Cana, outside grinding room):
"The way is made clear at the end of time."
- 4:10 (Er'Cana, between baking room and pellet room):
"The number of the watcher is six hundred and twenty-five."
- 3:72 (Ahnonay, base of stone hut): "Take time to understand the path of the shell."
- 2:30 (Ahnonay, fourth sphere maintenance room):
"Darkness comes at the end of time."
- 5:57 (Ahnonay, second-to-last room):
"The path is folly for those who toil."
- 5:32 (Lower Bahro Cave): "Roll the stone to know the deceiver."

Subsequent accounts of other travelers' visits revealed that there were other prophecies that I did not find. Perhaps someone reading these words right now will discover them.



Ladder appeared from the wall.

Sure enough, after 625 D'ni seconds (approximately 14.5 minutes), several stone slats popped out from the wall to the right of the ball, forming a makeshift ladder. I climbed it.



Narrow path above ball track.

The ladder led up to a narrow path above the ball track. I followed it to the end.



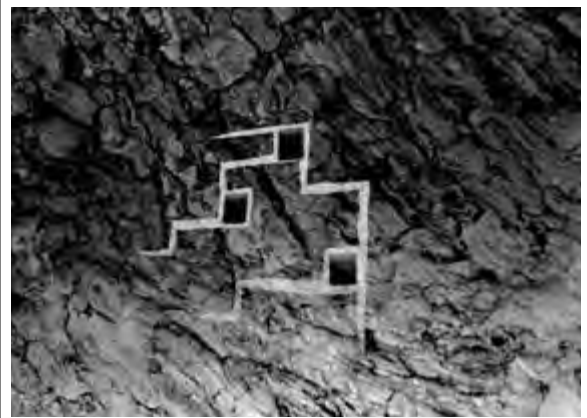
Machinery at end of track.

At the end of the track was a large machine made of blue spheres and elegantly sculpted metal poles and stone slabs. I pressed the glowing blue button in the center of it, and a bridge extended behind me.



Bridge to Great Tree.

Once the bridge was fully extended, I crossed it and followed the stairs at the other end to reach a rope suspension bridge leading to the heart of the Great Tree.



Fifth line-and-box etching.

A fifth line-and-box etching was engraved onto the wall opposite the Shell Cloth. I took a picture of it.



Touched Shell Cloth.

Inside the Great Tree was a Shell Cloth, which I quickly touched in order to mark my progress past the ball puzzle.



Power switch.

A blue power switch stood against the far wall. Pressing it turned off the swirling illusionary sky outside the Great Tree. (I also found out later that it retracted the ladder and opened the door in the ball puzzle room.)



Walked the path of the shell.

The only other thing in the room was a spiraling pattern of light on the floor. Right from the start of my journey, Yeesha encouraged me to walk the path of the shell, so I decided to take her advice literally. I carefully walked along the lighted path from outside to the glowing circle of light in the middle. As I did, I felt myself link.

Myst



The library on Myst, seen through the fireplace grate.

I reappeared in a narrow shaft. It took me a second to realize where I was—I was inside the fireplace on Myst island! It was a place I had only seen in the *Myst* game, and here I was, actually standing in it! Through the barred window, I could see the destroyed Linking Book that ensured that Atrus' malicious sons, Sirrus and Achenar, would never escape from their prison Ages.



Pressed red button at my feet.

I pressed a red button at my feet. The light inside the fireplace turned off, and the gate rose slightly, just high enough for me to crawl out of it.



Standing in Myst library.

I slipped out under the fireplace gate and stood in the Myst library. There wasn't anything in particular to do in here, but the sense of history was palpable, and I took a few minutes to enjoy it.



Catherine's clothing.

On one of the bookshelves, I saw an outfit of clothing in a heap. I picked it up and recognized it as belonging to Catherine, Yeesha's mother. Although its unisex design would have allowed me to wear it, I opted to stow it in my backpack and bring it back to my Relto instead.



Fireplace rotated to reveal Yeesha Page.

Just as the fireplace rotated to reveal the Linking Book to Atrus' prison in the original *Myst*, it rotated to reveal a Yeesha Page that gave me a fireplace in my Relto. After retrieving it, I pressed the red button to rotate the fireplace again and reset the puzzle.

Yeesha Page: Fireplace



Entered the *Myst* fireplace puzzle solution.

I crawled back into the fireplace and pressed the red button to reset the puzzle. On a whim, I pulled out a *Myst* Prima guide I'd brought with me and entered the fireplace puzzle solution used in the original game.

Fireplace Puzzle Solution



Used five line-and-box clues to come up with this puzzle solution.

Although getting the Yeesha Page was a major accomplishment, I knew there was more to the fireplace. That's when I remembered the five line-and-box etchings I'd seen during my journey. They weren't a map; they were parts of the solution to this puzzle! I sketched them all out and overlaid them on top of each other to discover the solution to the fireplace puzzle.



Fireplace rotated to reveal Linking Book.

The fireplace rotated exactly as it did for the Yeesha Page, but this time, a Linking Book sat on the shelf in front of the open gate. I picked it up and looked at the Linking Panel: It showed the image of the K'veer prison in D'ni, where Atrus was imprisoned at the end of *Myst*. I placed my hand on the Linking Panel.

K'veer Prison



Rubble blocking the door out of K'veer's prison.

Linking into K'veer Prison, I heard Yeesha again. I stood spellbound and listened to her speak, only just barely remembering to turn on my tape recorder to capture her words:

"I have taken time...do you know his body no longer lies in his vault? I have seen new life, his new life, and I have followed the shell. Round and round and back again. I taught you the same."

Kadish Tolesa

When Yeesha said that "his body no longer lies in his vault," she meant that Kadish Tolesa's skeleton had been removed from his vault at the end of the Age he named after himself. When I went there later to confirm this for myself, I found his skeleton next to a new Linking Book that brought me to a duplicate vault that lacked the original's treasure and Kadish's remains. In its place was a helmet and a Yeesha Page that added butterflies to my Relto.

"What will grow? The tree of all things."

"Who will grow it? The grower."

"I will grow it."

"The grower is the one who leads. So, you will follow me."

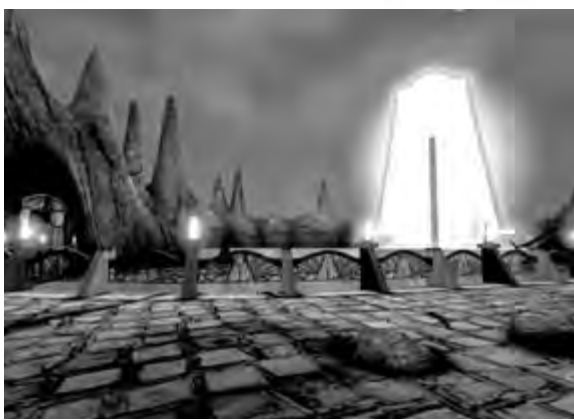
"Who links at will? The grower."

I felt the sensation of linking. K'veer vanished around me, and I reappeared at the ferry terminal on Ae'gura Island in D'ni. Looking out over Kerath's Arch, Yeesha continued:

"The grower banishes the darkness and brings light to the cavern. Have you seen the light?"

"To think they believed him...with such...."

"It is I who command light."



Let there be light.

I shielded my eyes as a brilliant glow issued forth from Kerath's Arch and illuminated the entire cavern. "Sing in the time of joy," she said. "Call in the time of dark. Weep in the time of pride.

"And take my hand again young one."

Yeesha took me by the hand, and we linked together back to K'veer. Yeesha left me with a few final words: "Time conquered. Light to darkness. Linking without Books.

"You have done well. You have seen words fulfilled....

"But still more to be fulfilled.... There is a new tree. Do you believe?"



Atrus' clothing lay in a heap near Yeesha's letter.

Atrus' Clothing and Yeesha Page

I must have been overcome by the sights I had seen, because I don't remember Yeesha leaving; I only recall becoming aware that she was no longer there, and that I was still in K'veer. All of the exit doors were locked, but I took comfort from the Relto Linking Book at my hip.

In one corner of the room, I found a pile of clothes that I recognized as Atrus'. It felt a little strange to take them, but Yeesha had obviously placed them here as a link to the past. I picked them up carefully and brought them back to my Relto's closet.

Next to Atrus' clothing was another Yeesha Page. I added it to my Relto Book and found that it caused all manner of lush green flora to sprout forth from the island's rocky soil.



Yeesha's Note

A sheet of parchment rested on a crude stone table next to the Yeesha Page. I picked it up and read it. It was a note from Yeesha to her father, Atrus:



Father,

I know you cannot hear me, yet I must write to you. In my heart, you will hear my voice, the voice of your desert bird.

Words written to me, for me, and of me. Who would believe that the tree would die, so that I could grow it again? You always did. Your desert bird was so much more and I understand you now. You knew, though I did not.

Now I know. I know much, Father. I have learned of the death.

I am powerful, Father. I have seen new life, and brought it forth myself.

And I go now to become the grower. If only you could see. Perhaps you do.

3:118

2:45-55

I am Yeesha.

I am the Grower.

Thank you, Father.

Your burden is lifted.

I looked up the verses Yeesha quoted in her letter:

3:118: "And few will be greater than the grower."

2:45-55: "When the tree dies there will come a new one.

A grower to learn of the death. A grower to see new life. A grower to bring the gathered. A grower to restore the least. A grower to move through time. A grower to link at will. A grower to follow the shell. A grower to banish the darkness. A grower to graft the branches. A grower to join the paths."

So it was true: Yeesha was the prophesied Grower. I now understood the purpose of my journey through the Ages of Uru, to D'ni, and along the path of the shell. It felt as if an ending had been written, but if I knew Yeesha, it wouldn't be long before another story began.



Artifacts of Interest

As in my previous two journeys, I discovered several D'ni artifacts of interest during my travels through the Ages of Er'Cana and Ahnonay. These artifacts can be roughly sorted into two groups: Yeesha Pages and articles of clothing.

Yeesha Pages

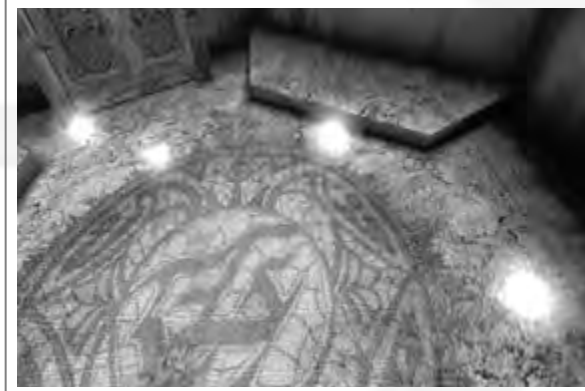
Yeesha Pages are pages of the Relto Linking Book that add new features to Relto when added to the Linking Book. To add a Yeesha Page to the Relto Linking Book, just touch it, and a copy of the page appears in the book.

After you add a Yeesha Page to the book, you can deactivate it by opening the book and touching the glowing green image on the page. The image stops glowing, and the feature that it creates will no longer be present on the next visit to Relto. To reactivate a page, simply touch the page's image again.

I found five Yeesha Pages during my journey. They are listed below in the order in which I found them:



Fire Marbles



I found my first Yeesha Page on my trek through Er'Cana's industrial complex. From the control room, I had to turn off treatment pool #2's mixing arms, open its hatch, and drain its water. I then climbed into the empty pool and walked down the pipe at the end of it to reach the Yeesha Page.

Clock



I found this Yeesha Page in the maintenance room of Ahnonay's second sphere, after a mind-bending series of links (see the end of the "Ahnonay" section for the details). Adding it to my Relto Linking Book gave me a clock in my Relto.

Fireplace



This Yeesha Page was hidden behind the *Myst* fireplace. I was able to rotate the fireplace and retrieve the page by entering the fireplace puzzle solution from the original *Myst* game.



Lush Relto



I found this Yeesha Page sitting on the table with Yeesha's note to Atrus and Atrus' clothing. When added to my Relto Book, it caused green grass to sprout on the island and ivy to climb the walls of the hut.

Butterflies



This Yeesha Page was left in Kadish Tolesa's empty vault at the end of the Age of the same name. When I placed it in my Relto Book and linked back to my Relto, I saw that several clusters of butterflies now flitted about.

Pieces of Clothing

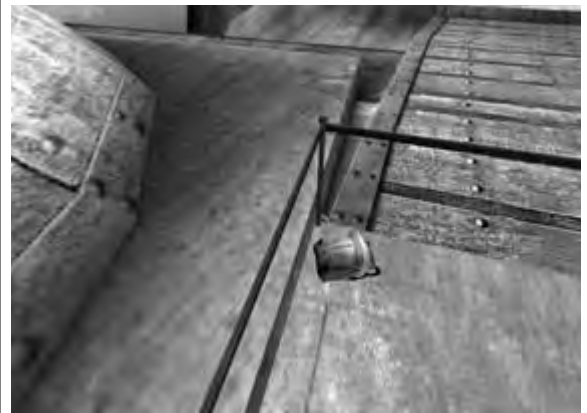
I picked up several pieces of clothing as I found them in the Ages and added them to my Relto's wardrobe. Some of them were of great historical importance, while others were practical for exploration or simply fun to find and wear. They are listed in the order in which I found them:

Great Tree Fleece Jacket



I found the Great Tree fleece jacket at the beginning of my journey, in the Watcher's Sanctuary. It was hanging on the railing of a balcony that overlooked the Great Tree.

Backpack



This stylish and practical backpack was next to the ladder leading down to the pellet room in Er'Cana. I could not have missed it if I'd tried.

Maintainer's Suit



Upon returning to Gahreesen, I entered the training facility (the second, larger rotating building) and explored one of the two rooms that held several varieties of Maintainer's Suits. I accidentally triggered a machine lit with green lights by stepping into the center of it. The machine fit me with my own Maintainer's Suit. Unfortunately, it was too bulky to store in my Relto closet, but I could return to Gahreesen any time I wanted to wear the suit again.

D'ni Goggles



D'ni goggles such as these were used by the D'ni, whose tolerance for bright light was lowered after ten thousand years of living in an underground cavern. I found these goggles in Atrus' old bedroom in the Cleft, the same room in which I found his letter to Yeesha. I wonder if these are actually Atrus' own goggles?

Watcher's Sanctuary Clothing



I found this D'ni shirt in the second-to-last room of Ahnonay, opposite the control panel that opens the final room with the Bahro Stone to the lower Bahro Cave. It's embroidered with the icon of the Watcher's Sanctuary and looks quite sharp, if I do say so myself.

Catherine's Clothing



Catherine's clothing was found on a shelf in the library on Myst Island. D'ni clothing seems to be pretty unisex, as this outfit can be worn by men and women.

Atrus' Clothing

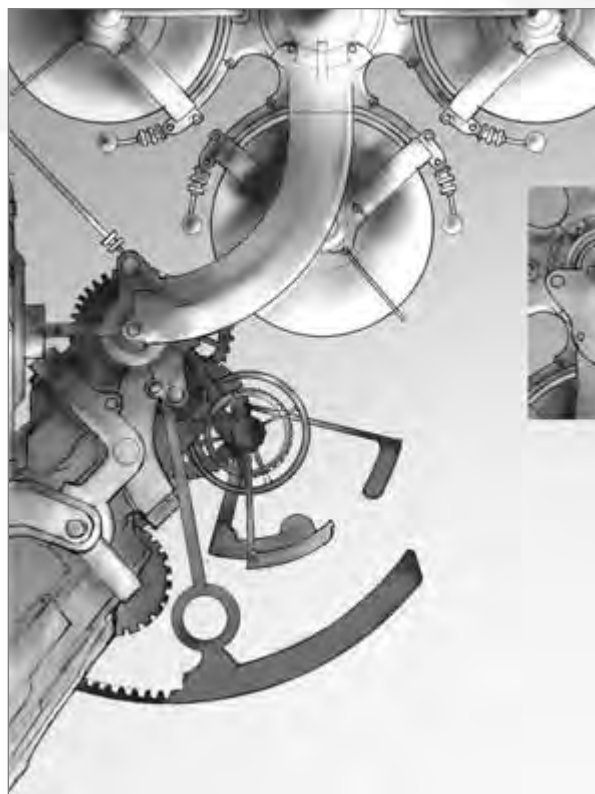


Yeesha left behind a suit of clothes belonging to her father, Atrus, in K'veer. They happened to be a perfect fit.

Helmet



I found this helmet in Kadish Tolesa's vault at the end of the Age he named after himself. It was the only object of value (aside from a Yeesha Page) that was left in the vault.



PART FOUR: NOTES AND JOURNALS



Uru Journals

The following essays, notes, and other writings are ©2003 D'ni Restoration Council and are reprinted here with the kind permission of the DRC. Journals are provided as they were when the author found them. They may have been changed since that time.

Found during Teledahn Journey

Note: From Marie to Dr. Watson



This note was discovered in the D'ni office used by Douglas Sharper, which he reached via a Linking Book in Sharper's Teledahn office.

Dr. Watson—

Big problems. The house of Noloben is not empty. I met someone there today. My D'ni isn't great, but I spoke with him for a while. Yeah, he's D'ni and, as we figured, he knows a lot about the creatures. A whole lot. We obviously need a meeting ASAP.

—Marie

Journal: Douglas Sharper (Personal)



This journal was discovered in the D'ni office used by Douglas Sharper, which he reached via a Linking Book in Sharper's Teledahn office.

- 11.14.97—Looks like they've agreed to let me take control of Teledahn. Time to start a journal. Officially.
- 11.17.97—Maybe not. Kodama popped in, going on about his inspections, in his usual arrogant manner. What a joke.
- 11.24.97—Now it's Watson's turn. Acted as though he was chatting but I could tell he was looking all over, checking on my progress, or maybe making sure I can be trusted. I'll just get used to it.
- 11.25.97—Time to move forward. DRC isn't going to change any time soon.
- 12.15.97—Merry Christmas. Going up for a few months. Can't take this red tape anymore.
- 1.29.98—Yay for Broncos. Patriots should have been there. Stupid Steelers. Okay, maybe Teledahn will help me to forget all this.
- 2.15.98—Looks like I'm going to need Watson after all. I've found all kinds of journals and notes upstairs that I'm going to need translated. I think Watson is going to let one of his assistants help me out. Sam.
- 3.1.98—Sam is not the fastest translator I've ever seen. I don't think he's even started. Kodama came by again today.
- 3.3.98—Spotted something today. Creature of some kind. Forget the history of this place, for now. I've got to see that thing again.
- 3.7.98—Saw her again. Wow. What a beauty.
- 3.9.98—She's very sensitive to sound. Startles like an antelope. I'm estimating she's a good forty feet. Killer-whale type. Hard shell though.
- 3.18.98—No sign of her in this area, at least. Sam said he's going to have some time next week. At this rate. . . .

3.25.98—She showed up again. I saw her eating. She likes the Flappers. Feeds on them. Pretty quick and agile for her size. Surprised me. Of course, those Flappers aren't real bright. Those who weren't eaten went right back to the spot and waited for her to show up again.

Looks like this place was written in 8990 for a D'ni Lord. Guild of Caterers. 250th birthday present. If I'm ever 250, someone better give me something better than this place.

4.5.98—Sam is busy again. Did get me some more translations though. Seems like the mushrooms were used for some kind of delicacy. To be honest, I'm not sure Sam got that one right. Doesn't make a lot of sense, not with what I'm seeing.

4.7.98—Watson told me Sam is too busy to help me. I'm going to have to learn this language myself, or find someone who can actually help me.

4.8.98—Watched her for a while today. Definitely feeds on the Flappers close to shore. Also feeds on mushrooms.

4.15.98—Does she ever feed on mushrooms. Watched her completely destroy one today. Brought the whole thing down and fed for some time. Until scared off by something.

4.17.98—Mushroom is gone. Probably sank. Kodama came by again today and I was glad the girl wasn't around. Last thing I need.

5.14.98—1. The Flappers like the spores. 2. The creature likes the Flappers. 3. She's scared to death of loud sounds. If I get this equipment running, she's gone. Heading up in a week. Going to try and get this gate down before I go. See if she'll come in while I'm gone.

5.20.98—Gate is down. See what happens when I come back. Hopefully there are mushrooms left.

8.12.98—Three mushrooms were down. Seems all of them were a particular kind. She was in the lagoon. I think I could have taken her out, but not yet. DRC would have a fit. Probably kick me out or something. She's definitely an air breather. Could hear her today. Sleeping, on the surface. Kodama followed me here and scared the heck out of her. She woke and shot out of here, fast. Kodama never saw her. Apparently some new guy is learning D'ni and wants to work with me. We'll see.

8.28.98—There are quite a few new people coming down. A group from some game company was recently here and there was quite a stir. I met a few of them. Nice guys.

9.15.98—Haven't seen her for a full month. I'm going to start working on the equipment here. Can't wait forever and the DRC is getting on me. As though they owned the place.

10.1.98—The tower is almost working. Need some tools from the surface. No sign of Shroomie. Met the new guy—
Nick—nice guy. This might be real good. Smart guy.

Picking up D'ni fast. He's going to keep at it, but I gave him some material to study in the meantime.

11.5.98—Quick trip up and back down. Tower is working. Nick dropped off some translation and it all matches the old stuff. He's working on new material now. Tower is power and more projects.

11.14.98—These buckets are a mess. So is the elevator. Have found some kind of pump mechanism to get that water out. I think all of it will have to wait. I'm heading back up for holidays and end of season. Tickets to Monday night game against Miami. Patriots still in the playoff hunt.

1.7.99—Patriots out. Back down. Nick is more than I could have hoped for. Seems up for keeping the translation out of DRC's hands. Has had some bad experiences with Kodama and Engberg and in my camp now. Perfect.

Apparently Hinahsh only owned the Age for ten years. At his death, Teledahn was left to the Guild of Caterers who installed the equipment that I'm working on today. Some of the translation has actually been rather helpful. I think I can get the pump working. Was never meant for water, but I think it would pump out the water.

Nick says there is quite a bit about a Guild Captain Ventus who ran the Age for quite a few years and directed the industrialization of the place. Did quite a job apparently. Although, Nick is still reading.

Signs of Shroomie, but I haven't seen her for a long time and I'm not going to stop working on the equipment now. Apparently no mention of her in the stuff Nick is reading.

2.4.99—Pump works, although I'm keeping the water there. Nice form of protection to the other side. At least until I discover what it was used for. That's Nick's job now. I have my ideas though.

Seems as though Ventus installed the gate to keep Shroomie out of here. Didn't like her eating his mushrooms. Good idea.

2.6.99—Ventus maybe wasn't so great after all. Ruined the place. Turned it into what we see now. Explains the differences in early descriptions to the later ones.

Seems the Age was auctioned off and that's all of the official records. Nick can share those with the DRC. I don't mind.

2.8.99—Showed Nick some of the manuscripts I've kept hidden. I'm quite sure I can trust him. He's given the official report to Watson and the others and is willing to do these extra translations on the side. Good man.

3.1.99—Watson, Kodama, and Sutherland came by today. It was pre-arranged so they didn't see anything they didn't need to. They seem satisfied with the work I'm doing, although the fact they continue to check on me still drives me mad. They say they want the Age ready for

visitors relatively soon. I didn't realize that anyone and everyone would be allowed access to the place but why not I suppose. I'll still have my areas.

3.4.99—Big argument today with Watson. Upset I didn't share with him all that Nick had translated. Miscommunication, although I'm happy Nick has kept his mouth closed regarding the other. Regardless, I can't take their nit-picking. I'm heading to the surface for a long trip. Returning to Africa again with the fellows. Don't know when I'll be back here.

Nick knows to keep things quiet. I've set things up for Shroomie to return and I have plans to bring down some new items. Look forward to returning a long time from now.

2.15.00—Back to Teledahn again. The surface trip triggered some ideas for here that I think I'll begin exploring. Some talks with Engberg might be in order soon.

Nick has gotten a load of translation done. I'm going to try and summarize as best I can. If I can remember everything.

This place was owned by a fellow named Manesmo. The man apparently got the place cheap somewhere. He started the harvesting of spores again—it seems the Age had corrected itself over time. Bread apparently, they were making. The same delicacy D'ni had raved about before. Made a decent amount of money.

However, he was doing lots of stuff in the dark. Slave trading. I'm sure Watson would have a fit if he knew this. His precious D'ni. Where they were going, we can't find out. But it explains the cages and the whole backside of this place, really. Hiding from Maintainers I suppose.

We found some more mention of Shroomie as well. Manesmo saw her pretty frequently. They even found her nest. I'm heading out tomorrow to see.

As far as Shroomie herself, she has been here, but was not here when I arrived. Shrooms have managed to disappear and she broke a walkway on the backside. Have to fix that now.

2.17.00—No nest. Remains, yes, but she's obviously not been there for a long time. This place is much bigger than I thought. Learned that today.

3.3.00—The DRC is getting pretty serious about letting people down here. They have moved to The Island and are trying to get portions of the city open for visitors. Moving headquarters to a building there as well. I suppose I'm going to have to get serious about it as well. They're going to make me if I don't. So back to the equipment.

4.15.00—Cars are giving me all kinds of trouble. So is this ridiculous elevator and I don't know why. I'm making a quick trip to the surface. Parts.

5.23.00—Back with parts. Nick has found out that slaves were going to a place called Rebek. Haven't heard of it myself. I'm going to ask Watson tomorrow.

5.25.00—Watson has heard of it. Says they've been there. Asked how I knew and I realized it was a mistake to ask about it. Told him Nick told me and fortunately Nick told me later he had been doing some official translation for the Age. Lucky me. Be more careful.

5.28.00—Found a new book today. A very special book.

6.15.00—Cars are working. Why they need to work I don't know but apparently the DRC wants this place restored to its original condition. So, cars are working.

7.2.00—Elevators work. Finally. Nick tells me this Rebek Age was amazing but he was pulled off of it. Games with the slaves from here were played there. Hunting game of sorts. I'm not for hunting people but the game does sound fun. Doubt Watson will want to approve that Age too fast.

8.2.00—DRC is planning on opening this place up in 2002. They, of course, haven't bothered to tell me that but regardless, it's true. Working on getting some lights going in here. I have a feeling inspections will be increasing.

8.10.00—Watson informed me of the plans today. 2002 is the target. Thanks.

8.12.00—Nick stopped by and we've got a little more information. Looks like there is some kind of weapon in our hands. At least it could be used as a weapon. After the lights.

8.15.00—Inspection planned for next month.

9.12.00—Lights are functioning. Cars. Doors. Elevators. Not sure what else they'll want but I'm sure they'll come up with something.

9.15.00—Well, stupid me. I have an entire list of items that need to be accomplished for this place to be safe. I won't be taking any more Ages, after this one. Maybe a city location. I can't take this.

9.17.00—Shroomie is back. Watched her all day. Out of the blue, I think she's starting to like me. This could be good. I'll give up working for a short while.

9.20.00—She's nervous but coming back daily. I keep the gate down.

9.21.00—She's trapped. Got the gate up with her inside eating Flappers. Set her off. Pretty obvious she can be a nasty girl if she wants. But still I'll have a shot. And I need to do it before Kodama shows up.

9.22.00—Got her. Time for a surface trip with the important parts. I'll sink the rest.

10.30.00—Wooden walkways are fixed. Rails are up. Among the other things on the list of DRC requests. If this place isn't safe, I don't know what is. Inspection tomorrow.

Nick has dropped off some more translations. Seems as though a major inspection into the illegal activities was

going on immediately before the fall. Doesn't look like they found anything.

11.1.00—Inspection went fine. I guess this place is safe now. I'm heading back to the surface for more tools, football, and the holidays.

2.1.01—Another missed playoffs. Oh well. Things are stressful here. One year to go for initial visitors and it is beginning to show. However, Sutherland dropped by today. Nice woman. We had a nice talk.

2.5.01—I'm helping out in the city now, not much work to do in Teledahn. Clean-up here and there. Maintain. I'm hoping for a certain location in the city, maybe my helping will get me some leverage with Watson. I'm enjoying the time with Sutherland anyway.

3.3.01—More city work. Not much happening here.

4.7.01—Nick managed to get me an extra Teledahn book today. Good man.

5.12.01—Shroomie is back! Obviously not the same one, but we've got a new girl here. Amazing. I'm curious to know how many there are now. I think I'm going to try and schedule another trip in the next couple of months.

5.23.01—The trip was a success. Amazing. There are quite a few of these creatures all over. Perhaps a seasonal thing. Waters where I had been before I found a pod of the creatures. And a bigger one. I'm not sure but these seem to be young ones. The larger creature was absolutely stunning. I've never seen anything like it in all my days of hunting. I was actually a little frightened. This thing could have swallowed my boat whole. To take even a small portion home would be . . . I'm going to have to think this one through.

6.1.01—Back to work here. I'm installing a gun of some kind down on the docks. It's a D'ni mining instrument I believe. Regardless, the DRC, of all people, want it set up. Strange.

6.30.01—Gun is up. Not working, but up. Laxman will have to get it working, or least give it a shot. Not familiar enough with this kind of D'ni technology.

7.5.01—More city work and less Teledahn work. Did clean up the cages and the larger mushroom. Took out some crates and moved them upstairs. I think another surface trip is in order. Marie wants to go up as well.

10.12.01—A little longer than I had expected for obvious reasons. Horrible tragedy. I'm happy to have D'ni. A distraction of sorts.

10.14.01—I brought down a fish tank. At least the first part. Want to see if I can learn more about these Flappers. I can get some young ones and some water from the lake. We'll see.

10.21.01—The stress level is rising rapidly. Only a few months out and they are planning on bringing down some visitors. They are cleaning up a neighborhood for a group of new people. Interesting.

11.2.01—Victor found some kind of communication device this week. A KI they are calling it. Very interesting device, I have to admit. Victor does seem to know his stuff, at least. Talked to Engberg about a building in the city that I'd like to have. We'll see.

11.3.01—Victor can't get to the gun for a long time. In fact, DRC wants the whole thing taken out now. Fine by me.

11.5.01—Found another new book today. Perhaps I have my city location now. Great view as well. I'm moving some things there. A little more out of the way. Glad I bought the more expensive fish tank now.

11.22.01—Received a report from the surface. Patriots aren't doing well and I don't think I'm going home this holiday. I'll help here. Teledahn seems stable but Kodama has asked me to look at a different Age and help them out. Sounds like an interesting place. Ahnonay or something. Why not?

12.12.01—Strange place. Needs lots of work but it's been good. I think I'm heading up to the surface. Watson had recommended we go up. Marie is joining me again.

2.10.02—Wasn't supposed to be gone this long but who would have thought the Patriots would win the Super Bowl! I don't think Watson is very pleased but too bad. Visitors are down and I wasn't here to see them.

2.16.02—The DRC wants me to go through Teledahn again, although I'm not sure why. This place has been cleaned up for months. Typical of them. I should know better by now.

2.17.02—New Shroomie creature seems pretty happy here. Runs when the machinery comes on but usually returns. I usually leave the gate down.

2.23.02—KIs are working great. Pretty amazing devices. Haven't met any new visitors. Watson says he doesn't want me to. Typical bureaucratic nonsense.

3.1.02—They are ready to open up The Island. I have to admit I'm pretty excited about watching these people visit. I'd love for them to come to Teledahn, but the DRC insists it's not ready. Not sure what more they want.

3.20.02—A new group of visitors are coming. The DRC is really hyping this one. Authorized explorers.

3.27.02—Enjoyed talking to Robyn and Rand again. Nice guys. Hadn't seen them in a long time. The new authorized explorers seem to be enjoying themselves. Fun.

4.5.02—Funny. DRC posts that restoration efforts will be given top priority this month. More meetings and more inspections when the Age has been ready for months. If it makes them feel better. They did acknowledge that I found the book. Wasn't expecting that.

On an even funnier note, all meetings are being held in the Tokotah now. I couldn't have asked for much more.

- 4.20.02—So they made that public! Shroomie was in here and I had to make up some reason to postpone the trip. If they had seen the equipment and such, in fact, it's time to get rid of some of this. If the DRC had come here today, could have been bad.
- 4.25.02—Phase Five approval. What's that even mean?
- 5.12.02—Simpson told me about a pretty strange stone, so I tried it out. I want it myself. I think I'll keep it here. Don't really care what the DRC thinks of that either.
- 5.17.02—Stone is gone. Vanished right out of my office. Where's Simpson?
- 5.20.02—Got the stone back again. Simpson claims it was back where he found it. Regardless, this time I'm keeping it in a more secure location.
- 5.25.02—Now Phase Five approval. I've been so angry this past month, I've been ready to throw in the towel and head back up. It's utterly ridiculous what they are doing. The safety requirements they are pulling out. Somebody had better do something before we have an all-out government down here. Although these threads on the forums may be something. The DRC, in secret, is suspecting Zandi. This could get fun.
- Stone is gone again. How?
- 5.30.02—Last time with the stone. I'm trying a more secure location.
- 6.3.02—Gone again.
- 6.7.02—I have the stone more one time. Simpson says he can't take it again. So I'm trying one more thing. Gut feeling about these creatures.
- 6.18.02—Watching people here has been fun. Maybe it all has been worth it.
- 6.20.02—Stone hasn't gone anywhere this time. I think they're afraid of the hanging rocks. Interesting.
- 7.11.02—Surprise, Rebek was shelved. I saw this one months ago.
- 7.23.02—This is wild. They are flipping out over there with these Zandi breaches. Hilarious. I love it. Of course they haven't mentioned a thing to me yet. I'm sure they don't plan on it.
- 8.26.02—Big meeting this weekend for the DRC. They don't know what to do about Zandi and it's driving them nuts. They think it's only going to get worse. I hope so.
- 9.3.02—Kodama wants to bet on surface games now? Who would have thought, but I'll take his money.
- On a more adventurous note, Nick got us into Rebek today. Amazing. I'd love to spend some time there but we had to hurry. He tells me there is a new Age as well with creatures. I'd love to get there but I doubt it will happen. The DRC is sick to their stomach with this Zandi stuff. I'm on his side but I hope this just doesn't make things worse.
- 9.07.02—Zandi is getting them on his side. I wish I could describe Kodama. Wow. I love it. I did see his sign on the surface. No one ever seemed to notice it though. I guess he's making them. Ha.
- 9.14.02—Marie has lost it. A t-shirt? I agree with Kodama on that one.
- 10.14.02—Kodama is taking money from me and it's driving me crazy. If I wasn't watching his veins burst in those meetings, I'd be much more angry. It's worth it though.
- 11.14.02—Well, Zandi is unstoppable now. He's going to bring people down and they can't stop him. It is funny but it's also more work. I want this to work for everyone so I'm helping out more where I can. Still hoping for leverage on that structure I've been wanting for a few years now anyway.
- 11.18.02—This Zandi stuff is great. I do think the DRC is going to be ready for them but still . . . more power to him. Amazingly, no one has officially talked to me yet from the DRC.
- 12.01.02—Looks like URU is it now. Thanks to Zandi, again.
- 12.24.02—Christmas Eve in Teledahn. If I imagine hard enough, the spores look like a Northeast Christmas. Not really. I think I'm heading back for the playoffs and New Year.
- 1.05.03—No playoffs but still a good New Year. This should be a fun year for D'ni. Also brought down some more fish tank pieces this trip. I think it's about ready. If I get a chance to work on it.
- 1.07.03—Should be interesting to watch Zandi and the DRC as well. I'll be anxious to see who gets the power here.
- 2.01.03—Looks like they are trying to get the upper hand. Explain the Zandi story and be up front about it. Watson had to convince some of his members of that one, believe me. But probably smart.
- 3.15.03—Ages are being approved, visitors are coming down. I'm losing time to write journals.
- 4.2.03—Closing, opening. I don't understand the idea but the DRC is definitely trying to get ready for the new arrivals. Another large group just came down and it seems as though things are going fairly smooth.
- 5.4.03—I've heard them talking recently about a house out on the Island. They are beginning initial restoration but I've got to find a way on that. Nick says the place is amazing. He's read some histories and the stories go on and on and way back. I'm going to talk to Watson now.
- 5.20.03—There are rumors of a D'ni survivor going around here. The DRC is keeping it low-key but it seems pretty reliable. Obviously, I'll be the last to hear but I've got to find a way to meet him as soon as possible.
- 6.25.03—Funny. Seems like a lot less people are in the city nowadays. DRC is talking quite a bit about visitors'

access to Ages that they have not approved. They are a little irritated to say the least, and trying to figure out a way they can control it. I don't think they can. Interesting.

Finally got the gun up and working. Laxman is getting better every day. The guy is a genius. Watson stopped by as well to see it working although he seemed more concerned with me cleaning up the scrap than the gun itself. Typical DRC.

7.9.03—Ironic. After all the trouble getting that gun together, I find a whole supply of them out on an island. Of course, the guns are just the beginning of this place. Some of the reason the DRC wanted me away from there is starting to make sense. Who would have thought?

7.18.03—Out of the blue, Sonya Michaels has contacted me. Old friend from the surface working for some paper up in Maine. Says she is coming down for a long period. Wants to write.

On a more typical note, Watson came by a few days ago asking me to name some of the wildlife here. They aren't finding the names the D'ni used for a lot of the animals. He added that my names need to sound D'ni though. I don't think he really appreciated Shroomie and Flappers. Anyway, I named the birds here Buggaros. I think some part of that is D'ni for big—that's what Nick said at least. Big bug. Wonder how they'll like that?

Found during Gahreesen Journey Journal: "The KI"



This journal was discovered in one of the Control Rooms of the Training Facility.

Base Functions—D'ni #3 on the back side of all of these devices . . . 3 functions? There's certainly more than that. 3 core functions? In any case, it's a convenient name: KI.

1. Nexus Interface—the Nexus seems to be just an interpreter for KI data. KIs allow users to provide or decline Book access to other KIs. I think we can make this work for neighborhoods as well. Age names defined in the KI appear in the Nexus. Or should. . .
2. Interpersonal Communication—Obviously the most important function: voice or text communication to other KI users. Inter- or Intra-Age—doesn't seem to matter.
3. Image Capture, Storage & Transfer—A single button-press captures an image and stores it within an appropriate Age directory. Images can be sent to other KIs as well as uploaded to some imagers (depending on versions). Seems main servers coordinated this functionality—might be tough to revive.
4. Journal Entry, Storage & Transfer—fairly simple. Write notes and store them. Again server handles transfer journals . . . KI-to-KI or KI-to-imager.
5. Markers—the ability to drop and collect markers at the operator's present location in an Age. Layers of functionality here—requires more research. Perhaps this feature could be tapped to help with the GZ problem . . . interesting.
6. Doors—In this Age, the KI (even at its most base level) opened Level 1 doors. Level 2 and 3 doors require higher versions.

There is much more variety to these devices than we first suspected. The "dispenser" is capable of handing out at least five versions and possibly more. Feature set varies widely. There must have been a system to control and track these devices . . . where?

Imager built into the unit is surprisingly compact and efficient. Uses this same blasted "lattice" compression system for lack of a better word . . . have to crack that. Powerful projection for something that fits on the top of a hand.

Markers

Purpose: Perhaps a training tool for Maintainers. Markers could be set up and recruits and/or lower ranks run through the "course."

Interface: KIs Interact with Markers in 3 Ways.

- "Team Capture"—once all the markers are placed, there are two teams that can collect markers. The KI registers the marker to the respective team. Markers can vanish after a time limit or after all have been registered. Markers must be in same Age. Test: Can markers be reset?
- "Hold"—again two teams. Markers only vanish after a pre-set time limit has expired. Markers do not disappear upon being activated although server keeps track of what team is "holding" it. Server summarizes team holding most markers at the end of the time limit. Markers must be in same Age.

- "Single Capture"—only one individual KI can register markers. Markers also carry text. Entire marker set can be sent via KI to another KI anywhere in the system. Markers can be placed in any Age.

Markers themselves seem identical to those produced by the Great Zero. In fact, I'm positive the same technology is being used, if not the Great Zero itself. It's possible the KIs are communicating with the Zero itself and writing these marks anywhere they are registered. Problems with that theory . . . Maintainer markers, etc. . . .

KI Registration

KI tracks of other KIs on 3 levels:

- Intra-Age: Any other KI within the Age is logged and displayed.
- KI-to-KI: Any individual KI can be registered for specific tracking. As a result, no matter where that KI is, journals, photos, etc. can be sent and communication can occur. Perhaps this was used for temporary or semi-permanent team missions. For our purposes—a "friends list?"
- Groups: The KI also recognizes groups, somehow related to the Nexus. Seems possible, if properly configured, to support Neighborhood lists with this function.

Journal: Gahreesen



Analysis

Author: Simpson (transcribed from voice recorder)
 Age: Gahreesen
 Date: 11/12/01—6/4/02 Multiple trips

NOTE

This journal was discovered in one of the Control Rooms of the Training Facility. On the cover was a note from Douglas Sharper that read: "Simpson, don't mention anything about the upper area of the fortress in your Gahreesen report. I don't want people wandering all over Teledahn looking for that weird Link stone."

Okay, one thing seems immediately obvious: This place was built for security. No one could write a link anywhere in this place, or the next. It was obviously a Maintainer facility of some kind and it doesn't seem that it was for general Guild Members. By that, I mean it was limited to at least the higher-ranking members.

As to how they got the first link written here, I don't know. Probably while it was under construction. It does seem pretty obvious that it's not going to happen again, unless something major happens to this place.

I should say that Kodama has some theories about the Age that have held up so far. May have been a "special forces" of a sort for the Maintainers. Started later, mid-8000s. Became somewhat of a research and development arm for the Maintainers Guild. I don't know, worth mentioning though. There are quite a few mentions of such groups in other docs Kodama has found, or at least seen.

Entrance

To begin with, I'd wager that no one other than a high-ranking government official or similar ever even made it to this room. That's just my guess but it seems pretty sound. I don't think any school buddies or girlfriends dropped by to see their Maintainer friend. The Linking Book we found was deep within the Maintainer Guild. I'm sure it was well guarded in its day.

You can see right off the bat the entrance was extremely secure. Thick walls, one door, a high window (sniper, maybe). If you manage to get in with a bomb or something, it's not going to do any noticeable damage.

I love the Maintainer symbol on the floor and everywhere else you look. As though I might forget and wonder where I am.

Waiting Room

So, visitors are escorted into this little waiting room. There's a window on one side, looks almost like a ticket window. Maybe turn in weapons or goods that aren't allowed. Maybe Books. I'm sure they didn't want Books in here.

Yeah, looks like mainly for Books. There is another ticket window on the other side, although this one looks different. I'm pretty sure those are beetle cages on the other side. Beetles that sought out ink. Somebody was just telling me there are all kinds of references to them in other docs. You didn't make it past this room with a Book.

As well, the doors never open at the same time. So, even if somehow you make it out of the entrance room, you're still not going to make it past these mammoth doors out of the waiting area.

Halls

Looks like the hall ran along the entire circumference of the building. There are plenty of rooms; I'll just try to hit them one at a time. First is an elevator though. However, looks like it's only down. Wonder if it was always that way? More security I guess. Once you've made it into the halls, there is still nowhere to go, at least if they didn't want you going anywhere.

Lockers

I would think that any Books that were brought to the Age were kept in the lockers. I'd imagine that some of the workers here or frequent visitors also kept some equipment, but I could be wrong on that. Looks like they kept some Maintainer gear as well; markers, helmets, etc. Seems a little out of place, honestly.

KIs

OK, things are becoming a little more clear now. Just had a long chat with Laxman and researched some different docs over in the city that Nick had. Looks like the current condition I'm seeing was not the original condition.

The KI was a major development not just for the Guild, but also apparently for all citizens. Turns out they were just starting to hand out the KIs to the public around the time of the fall. Nice timing.

So it looks like they had done some renovations in order to facilitate the mass amounts of visitors that would be coming in order to retrieve KIs. Turns out my little girlfriend analogy was pretty much completely wrong. Girlfriends and more were going to start coming here, at least to the open sections. Kodama corrected me. We've actually found multiple Books in neighborhoods, as well as the guarded Maintainer Book I mentioned earlier. Whoops.

So, visitors come in, walk through the doors, beetles check for Books, and they walk down the hall into the KI room. Get a KI and link out. Guards were probably at the up elevator, which is just behind this room. If they did happen to bring any illegal items, they get them back from the other side of the locker room and off they go back home with their new shiny KI.

Makes more sense as to why the Maintainer paraphernalia was in the locker rooms too. Probably a little display type thing for all the visitors. Impress them.

Warehouse

Quite a bit of goodies in here, all of which I'm sure most visitors never saw. Pretty bad cave-in from the floor above, although Engberg says structurally the place seems alright. He's doing more detailed inspections soon.

Looks like most of these crates are filled with KI maintenance-type equipment as well as a variety of spare parts, etc. . . . I don't know. Laxman will have to give this place a good inspection. I'm sure he'll love going through it all. Beyond me, I know that.

Beetle Cages

Convenient cave-in. Not sure how one is supposed to get in the beetle cages without it. No idea how they did it. Link, maybe. Regardless, pretty positive the cages were for beetles. Symbols on

the front and quite a bit of remnants in some of the dirtier cages. We'll have to clean those up. Wonder when they all died.

Speaking of access, another question. How'd they get to the second floor? Elevators skip the middle floor. More security, I suppose.

Second Floor

Destruction was a little more substantial than I thought. Looks like it tore out a section of the outer wall even. I'm going to get out of here until Engberg can come back again.

Been a few days, but I'm back. I'm no expert so I guess I have to trust Engberg. But. . . . He says this whole thing is one of the most solid, heavy pieces of construction he's ever seen. It's safe, he assures me. If I die here, and someone retrieves this recording, please sue him for me.

Second floor looks similar to the first; outer hall and a number of rooms. Have to remember that very few people probably ever walked these halls. There is no access via elevators, stairs, anything to get here. I assume it had to be done via a Linking Book, which is probably somewhere in the city. I suppose there could be a way to stop those elevators on the middle floor but I doubt it. Regardless, this floor was extremely secure; Book access only I'm guessing.

Guard Lounge

Next to the observation room—at least that's what I assume it was—is what looks like a guard lounge. Looks like they stayed here for long amounts of time. There are beds in here, as well as couches. I assume these guys manned the window/observation post while visitors were coming in.

Guard Lockers

More lockers, similar to the set downstairs, although these are manned with some heavy equipment. I'm sure Watson will want to see this stuff and keep it locked up well. In fact, I'm not even going to go into detail about it here. Laxman can write all about this stuff in a later report. I will say I didn't know the D'ni had these kinds of technology.

Gear Room

Now I see why this floor was so secure. Looks like the whole power structure for this building is here. Amazing construction. The entire building looks to have been powered by some underground water source that caused it to turn. They implemented a gear that would grab on to teeth in the ground outside, and provide them a power source as well. Talk about killing two giant birds with one stone. Pretty amazing.

Power looks somewhat complicated. Seems as though there were at least occasions that power was turned off, as there are obviously controls to do that, and then start it again. I'm heading to the top.

Top

Wow. I thought this building was big. The main portion is absolutely giant. And rotating too, of course. I'm overcome with the amount of work put in to this place just for security. It's everywhere. Almost comical picturing government officials walking the same paths I am. Amazing.

To get to the other side, looks like one had to walk across the bridge to the rock pinnacle. The first place since we've arrived that we're able to save a link. And it's not big. And there's a massive structure facing you if you did. Pretty funny to try and picture an army invading. All of them bunched up on this stone waiting for these bridges to rotate—What the? My gosh. . . .

The creatures. These things are something out of a horror movie. I've been up here a little while and I don't see them often but when I do, they are scaring me to death. I'm beginning to understand the fences and structures a little better. Perhaps some of them were designed to keep creatures out more than keep visitors in. Don't hang out in these woods, unless you have a big gun.

Another bridge, to reach the main portion of this place. More security. I will say that the platform between the bridges seems to have eroded. At one time, crossing the bridges was probably a security feature to ensure manageable groups would approach the larger building, one at a time—but I would wager it was still a lot easier than it is now. The erosion to the platform between the bridges has made it a little rougher. I suppose the Maintainers would like it even more in its current condition.

Mud Rooms

I'm not sure what to call these things, but they remind me of Mud Rooms so I'll call them that. Not much here. Looks like each bridge has a Mud Room attached to it, with another group of doors, etc. . . . There doesn't seem to be any kind of decompression or decontamination that went on here. Really they seem to be nothing more than another spot for another set of doors. Another secure location.

Training Center

I was going to go through each of the rooms here, but after making a quick overview, I think I'll just start with the entire thing.

There are three types of rooms in the building, two of each kind. There is a Control Room, one purple and one yellow, a Display Room, one purple and one yellow, and then a Conference Room. Though these aren't colored, I assume there is one for each "team."

The entire building seems to be centered on the massive wall in the middle. The Control Rooms control the wall, the Display Rooms display the uniforms that were worn in the wall (I presume) and the Conference Rooms allow the government visitors and high-ranking officials to confer about those training on the wall. See.

So Control Rooms first.

Control Rooms

I'm not going to go into controls for the wall in this doc. I'll let Laxman do that at some other time. Regardless, the panel here

obviously controls the wall. The wall was used for training as well as testing of various suits. I believe the central room can get pretty hot, cold, smoky, or anything else I can imagine, pretty quick. It was a competition—whoever could get to the top the quickest. Teams would set up the obstacles and members would race.

There is a side tunnel that provides access to the Display Rooms from the Control Room.

Display Rooms

Not sure that these were originally Display Rooms—or maybe they were. Either way, there are quite a few old Maintainer suits in here. There is also the latest Maintainer suit (or skin) here. I guess I should say the machine to put on the latest Maintainer suit is in here.

Now that we've had some time to look at this, it's incredible. We're talking about a suit that was skin tight, and had linking abilities, etc. built in. Very hi-tech as far as Maintainer suits go. Very impressive. A Maintainer would fall down the chute and while "traveling" to the interior room/the wall, the suit would be placed on him. I'm begging to try this thing but DRC is insistent no one does. Laxman already has someone on it, trying to figure out more. I'm first when they do.

I think these rooms could basically be described as team locker rooms.

Conference Rooms

Well I guess these rooms were where the bigwigs sat down and talked about their Maintainers. Obviously they are set-up to watch the wall, and there are displays that show the patterns being built and "played" on the wall. We'll never know but I can see the Guild Masters in here watching their men compete, preparing to send them out to some radioactive fireball Age to see if their new suits can stand the elements.

Upper Portions

I'm not going up now but we do know the upper portions were used as prison cells. Typical D'ni technology—they had a single Linking Book that went to all the cells. Since the building was always rotating, a very complicated linking apparatus and timing mechanism was associated with the Book. The timing of the link would determine which cell the person linked into. Apparently, it was very tight.

Speaking of linking. This entire building is rotating as well. It seems that most visitors came from the path from the well, although there were also Books directly to this building. There had to be. It seems that many of them also used the timing mechanism to link into specific rooms. Looks like another new feature designed and built by these guys. One of many I'm sure.

I'm just wondering where the main research labs were? Or better yet, where did everyone sleep or eat?

Found during Eder Gira and Eder Kemo Journey

Letter: From Dr. Watson to Matthew

This letter was discovered in the DRC field office on a D'ni rooftop, which was reached via a Linking Stone in Lower Gira.



Matthew,
The last batch of papers you sent were very interesting. Good work. Since you did such a good job, I've got another list I'd like you to divvy up to the team. How you do it is up to you.

I'd like some more information on family life: ceremonies, etc. . . . Anything related to birth, marriage, cultural events. I know we have quite a bit of source material for this so anything you get would be helpful. I think we've gathered quite a bit on science and technology and not enough on the personal lives of these people.

We have quite a bit of Guild information but gathering that all up into one tidy area would be nice.

The Fall is still an obvious area where we are lacking. I'm not sure I can help you with research material but given the latest information we are getting, at some time, we are going to have to dig into this. I recommend assigning someone the sole task of The Fall.

Continue on with the Kings. A short synopsis of all the kings would be helpful following the form you started with the last batch.

We still have religious writings we need to translate. These are going to be the most difficult but I think they can give us large amounts of helpful information.

We have a stack of journals from various D'ni residences, etc. . . . not to mention Ages.

I think that will be more than enough for now. Again, thank your team and tell them they are doing great work.

—Dr. Watson

Note: From Nick

This note was discovered on top of the remnants of a Journey Cloth in the DRC field office on a D'ni rooftop, which was reached via a Linking Stone in Lower Gira.



Check this out. I know the DRC doesn't want us to touch these, but I bet Watson would like to know how these register with the doors too. It makes no sense.

And don't lose it. I could barely get it off the wall, and when I did, it was pretty scary. Maybe the weirdest thing is that when I went back later, the cloth I got this piece from was intact again.

—Nick

Journal: Class Structure



This journal was discovered in the DRC field office on a D'ni rooftop, which was reached via a Linking Stone in Lower Gira.

Note: From Nick

Where the heck is my book? And why did someone take it in the first place!

—Nick



This note was discovered in the DRC field office on a D'ni rooftop, which was reached via a Linking Stone in Lower Gira.

Seems as though my first inclination toward class structure was incorrect. Though early on there was little in the way of a class society, such a high ideal faded quickly. By 9400 DE there were seven very distinct classes.

- Elite: The Lords and the Grand Masters of the Major Guilds. It was possible for private citizens to be accepted but, if so, abundant monetary resources were needed. It was only the elite who owned private libraries of Books and the private Islands.
 - Guild Members: Yes it was possible for the lower classes to attend but it seems by the end the schools were far too expensive and prestigious to allow for such. As a result, the graduates became a class among themselves. And a very high one at that.
 - Upper Class: The lowers of the three higher classes. Such citizens had succeeded in private enterprise and most likely provided the elite with their banks, pubs, etc. . . . No Major Guild education for the most part, but enough money to buy their way into the upper classes.
 - Middle Class: Mostly shop-owners and the like. Able to afford some luxuries of D'ni but still considered far from the Elite. Rare, but possible, for them to own Books as well as Private Ages. Seemed to make up most of the Minor Guild enrollment.
 - High Poor: The higher class of poor seemed to be made mostly of industrial workers, many of whom spent their time on foreign Ages (before it was outlawed of course). It seems that this class, along with the lower two, did not own Books.
 - Low Poor: I can't seem to find a better name for them. However, seems clear that there were two classes of poor. These low poor were relegated to their own districts and rarely seen even with the middle class and never with the upper classes. Possibly used as servants, although that was generally looked down upon.
 - Sub-Low?: Reference to "the Least" (an undefined sub-class?) are found on rare occasions. Not enough data to elucidate.=
- Quite a few obvious attempts to reach out and unify the classes, although I'm not sure it did much good. Common Libraries, Major Guild scholarships, renovation of poorer districts, all seemed more political than life changing. Not surprising I suppose.

Journal: Pregnancy



This journal was discovered in the DRC field office on a D'ni rooftop, which was reached via a Linking Stone in Lower Gira.

Now this is surprising. I can't say for sure but it seems fairly clear that D'ni women were only fertile for one D'ni "day" every two D'ni "months." In surface terms, that's roughly only thirty hours every seventy-two days.

If true, it explains quite a few things. First, why there were so few children for a people who lived three hundred years and secondly the reason behind the rather large celebrations of pregnancy.

As far as I can tell, these celebrations were usually limited to family members although they were rather large. There was quite a bit of prayer to Yahvo, as well as blessings from the family members. These "blessings" usually included vows to care for the pregnant woman and child through the coming months.

As I have mentioned in other areas, pregnant women were believed to be much more insightful and as a result, part of the pregnancy experience (although not part of the official ceremony) was using that insight to gain revelation from Yahvo. Though there was quite a bit of religious meditation expected of women during this time, I won't go into it here. However, this meditation was expected to primarily guide the women to her child's future, and its purpose and was taken rather seriously.

While pregnancy within marriage was cause for great celebration, the same cannot be said of pregnancy outside of marriage. As far as I can tell, any woman who became pregnant was expected to immediately marry and any child conceived out of wedlock was unable to join a Guild for its entire life. As well, no revelation was expected from such a mother. Such a curse was just as horrible for a lower-class woman, as her child would have no chance of ever attending the Guilds of the upper class and thus gaining status.

As far as I can see, gestation was a full year. Ten D'ni months—290 D'ni days—equivalent to one Earth year. I have found no records of multiple births.

Journal: Maturity



This journal was discovered in the DRC field office on a D'ni rooftop, which was reached via a Linking Stone in Lower Gira.

Similar to a variety of other cultures, the D'ni celebrated a child's entrance into reason and maturity. The D'ni believed that true maturity, or the Age of Reason as they called it, was achieved at the age of twenty-five. Before that, the D'ni believed that children's minds and hearts were not properly formed. Up until that time they even went so far as to say it was impossible for a child to truly make a correct decision as they were too easily controlled by other motives. That did not mean that what they did was not right or wrong but the D'ni believed that Yahvo did not hold them accountable for those decisions. Up to that point, it was apparently up to the parents to judge and protect and thus another reason society encouraged couples to only have one child at a time under twenty-five.

In the "ceremony of readiness," the D'ni celebrated a child's entrance into reason and maturity.

At the ceremony, the child was presented with a bracelet of knowledge (also translated "maturity"). I have to admit the translation is somewhat poor and makes it sound like a magical or superstitious item—a translation that does not fit the way they talk about it. In fact, it was a very serious item.

The D'ni viewed the bracelet as a sign of accountability. The individual, once given the bracelet, was expected to be responsible for his/her actions as he/she had true knowledge of good and evil and the wisdom to make the right choices between both. Associated with the bracelet were certain rights, as well as expectations to behave in a more correct manner.

From a religious standpoint, the "ceremony of readiness" signaled accountability to Yahvo, as well as fellow D'ni citizens. No longer were parents judged for the actions of their children on a religious level, and no longer was lack of knowledge an excuse to Yahvo. The Maker, they believed, now expected much more from them.

Though the Age of Reason was twenty-five, the D'ni did not consider true wisdom to come until much later. With not nearly the fanfare that the Age of Reason brought, at 125 years of age there was another celebration for reaching the Age of Wisdom. Perhaps most importantly, regarding that status, the D'ni were then allowed to reach the highest ranks of teachers or leaders (Grand Masters or Lords).

The same rules applied to women, and no woman under the age of 125 was technically allowed to advise, especially to the Kings. As well, it appears that a woman's fertility ended around age 125.

During the time of the Kings, advisors were required for those Kings who were under the age of 125, as the King himself had not achieved the Age of Wisdom. The Great King Ahlsendar was the only King who did not have an official advisor even though he was under the Age of Wisdom for the majority of his reign.

Journal: Marriage



This journal was discovered in the DRC field office on a D'ni rooftop, which was reached via a Linking Stone in Lower Gira.

Much more than modern cultures, within D'ni culture all citizens were expected to marry. In fact, it was even believed that marriage was an important part of a relationship with Yahvo as it taught and revealed the necessary requirements for such a relationship. Both marriage relationships and the relationship with Yahvo were described by the same D'ni word, *taygahn*. Literally translated, the word means "to love with the mind," and implied a deep understanding, respect, and most importantly, unselfish love for one another.

Obviously the religious influence on most of D'ni culture was very strong and, as a result, marriage was not something taken lightly. It was considered a lifetime commitment and, for a D'ni who could live to be 300 years old, it obviously was not a decision the D'ni felt should be rushed into and it seems as though it rarely was.

Some records point to rare arranged marriages, although for the most part it seems that the decision was up to individuals. Marriage was not permitted before the age of 25 and marriage between blood relatives was strictly forbidden. Though allowed, marriage between the classes was looked down upon. Marriage to other worlders was practically unheard of. I've found certain writings from the 9000s going so far as to call the mixing of D'ni blood with outside cultures a travesty, while others wrote such a child (who marries an outsider) was better off dead. Even so, there are reports in other documents of Kings even marrying outsiders. I'm a little confused. . . .

The marriage ceremony itself was not a single-day event, but one that took over five days. Attendance to those sections of the ceremony to which one was invited was extremely important and it was considered a disgrace to be invited and not attend.

The event usually began with a small ceremony held on the evening before the First Day of the marriage ceremony. The ceremony always took place at the home of the groom (or his parents) and was meant to confirm both the bride and groom's decision to be united to one another in front of their immediate family.

The groom presented his bride-to-be with a gift representing the confirmation of his choice. The acceptance of the gift by the bride-to-be was acknowledgment of her decision. Immediately after her acceptance of the gift, the bride-to-be was escorted away with her family and not to be seen by her groom until the Joining Ceremony that would take place on the Fifth Day.

The First Day was meant for the bride and groom to spend time with their families. As they were starting their own family, their old family would no longer be the highest priority. Thus, the day was set aside to spend time with that original family. Traditionally, the day ended with a large meal as well as speeches and blessings from the parents to the child.

The Second Day was set aside for the bride and groom to spend with friends, both married and unmarried. Traditionally, one of the friends would host a large dinner at the end of the day.

The Third Day was reserved for spending time with the soon-to-be in-laws. It was on that day that the bride and groom received blessings from their in-laws as well as other members of the family. Again, there was a traditional larger meal at the end of the day marked by speeches from the eventual in-laws and other soon-to-be family members.

The Fourth Day was meant for the couple to spend time alone with Yahvo, individually. Though many apparently viewed the day as a formality, others viewed it as the most significant of all the days. The day was often filled with prayer asking for Yahvo's blessings upon the event as well as a time to understand Yahvo's desires for their new lives together. It was also considered a time to purify themselves before Yahvo. Some chose to spend time with the priests or prophets, while others read the Holy Books and talked to Yahvo himself.

The Fifth Day was the Day of Joining. The early portion of the day was set aside for physical preparation, while the later part of the day was set aside for the Joining Ceremony itself.

For those who did not have access to Private Ages, the ceremony usually took place on "Marriage Ages." For the upper classes, the ceremony took place in Family Ages. All family was expected to attend, as were fellow Guild members.

All of those in attendance were divided into two sides. One side represented the groom while the other represented the bride. Between the two sides, in the center, was a long aisle and a triangular podium. The bride and groom would each approach their side of the podium by walking through their respective family and friends. It was after all, those family and friends who had made the bride and groom what they were, and the D'ni believed

it was those family and friends who should "present" the bride or groom to their spouse. The priest usually stood on the third side of the podium.

As with most important events, and especially marriage, the bride and groom wore the bracelets they had been given at birth as well as maturity. After the bride and groom arrived to the platform, the father of the bride would remove the bride's bracelets and give them to the groom. The D'ni believed the giving of the bracelets represented the giving of the bride's purity and adulthood to the groom. A short speech often followed the event. The father of the groom would follow the father of the bride with the identical procedure, giving his son to the bride.

The giving of the children was followed by an expression of both parents of their blessings upon those being joined, as well as all of those present. Symbolically, the bride and groom then switched sides to represent an acceptance of all the bride's family and friends of the groom and vice versa. Both the bride and groom then handed all four bracelets to the priest.

While the priest led the couple through their commitments to one another and Yahvo, the bride and groom placed their hands upon the podium. During the commitments, the couple made promises to one another followed by promised to Yahvo. All were recited aloud.

The priest usually reminded the couple that marriage was a reminder of *taygahn* (to know with the mind) and that their love should always be a representation of their love for Yahvo.

Following the commitments, the priest would place two new, and larger, bracelets upon the bride and groom. The groom's was placed upon the left wrist and the bride the right wrist. The new bracelets were meant to represent both the purity and maturity bracelets their spouse had previously worn. The D'ni emphasized that the spouse was now your responsibility to keep pure and knowledgeable of good and evil. The bracelets were meant to be a constant reminder of that responsibility, as well as the commitment to maintain the best for that spouse.

After the new bracelets were placed upon the wrists, the hands of the bride and groom were wrapped together with a tight cord, covering the wrist and hands completely. Upon completion, the priest placed a ring upon the pinky of each "free" hand. The rings were symbolic reminders of the entire ceremony and placed upon the fifth finger to represent the joining that took place on the fifth day.

The priest would then usually remove him/herself from the podium so that the couple could take his/her place. Together, the couple then walked down the aisle between the two "parties" and toward the far end of the aisle where a glass of wine waited for them. Before drinking, the couple knelt and prayed together to Yahvo.

After the prayer, they each drank from the cup and the two sides of the hall merged into one group, often with great celebration. They were now considered joined and the celebration could begin.

Families usually fed all in attendance and there was typically dancing and music. The couple was expected to keep their hands united throughout the night as a reminder that they were now

joined, both in the eyes of man and Yahvo. The binding of the hands was apparently meant to be somewhat troublesome, symbolizing that there would be difficult times to their relationship but that those times did not affect the fact they were now joined.

Following the celebrations, tradition was for the couple to embrace and the priest to hold a Linking Book to their skin so that they would both link to "vacation" or "honeymoon" type Ages. Though these vacations were usually short, it was not unusual for the man to not work for up to a year in order to build the new marriage.

I should also note that the cord used to join the couple's hands together was also viewed as a sacred item. It seems as though various couples used the cords in a variety of different ways; some using them for necklaces and others hanging them in their house.

Journal: King Ri'neref



This journal was discovered in the DRC field office on a D'ni rooftop, which was reached via a Linking Stone in Lower Gira.

Ri'neref was born in 207 BE (Before Earth) on Garternay. He was accepted into the Guild of Writers at the age of five (a standard age) and, as the years passed, quickly became one of the finest Writers that the Ronay had ever seen. Certain records go as far as stating that Ri'neref was "unsurpassed in skill"¹ by any other Writer of the day.

By the time he was 90, Ri'neref had achieved the rank of Guild Master and was well on his way to become the Grand Master. However, due to personal convictions, he never achieved that rank.

Ri'neref had long been a challenger of the views of the Guild of Writers, as well as the King himself. Ri'neref was apparently very concerned with the society's views pertaining to the purpose of writing and the challenge of acting responsibly with the " . . . great gift given to us by Yahvo."²

Around 73 BE, Ri'neref was asked by the Grand Master to write a Descriptive Book to a questionable Age . . . at least in the eyes of Ri'neref. He perceived the Age being used to house an uncivilized race that could be used for the purposes of the Ronay. Thus, Ri'neref refused to carry out the command from his Grand

Master and, after much debating, was apparently dismissed from the Guild of Writers. Some records do point to Ri'neref willfully excusing himself from the Guild, although regardless of how he left, much of the society found the "dismissal" unfair and some even went so far as to call it "detrimental to society."³

Around 59 BE, the fact that Garternay would not be able to serve the Ronay as a home for much longer⁴ was confirmed and the information made public. Ri'neref had long known of the state of Garternay and from the time of his dismissal had apparently been working on an Age that he felt would be a good place to live for those who wished to follow him.

According to various journals, Ri'neref managed to attract a few thousand Ronay and convince them to follow him in the ways that he felt important and to the Age that he had written. The King allowed Ri'neref to split away from the Ronay, along with a few other smaller groups, while the majority of Ronay left Garternay to a new home world called Terahnee. Ri'neref took his group to Earth, where he established the D'ni (meaning "New Beginning").

Ri'neref was a strong leader, immediately establishing himself as King and reigning for 120 years until his death. Obviously, those who followed Ri'neref to D'ni already respected him enough to separate themselves from their family and friends, and thus, records point to very few debates or disagreements within the society under the reign of Ri'neref.

As had always been the case with the Ronay, a group of surveyors was sent to D'ni, before the group officially moved there, to establish the Great Zero⁵ and the line emanating from it. A monument was built on the Great Zero in the year 0 DE.

Unlike previous occasions, Ri'neref established the line of the Great Zero as set apart for holy buildings. Without authorization by the reigning King, construction was forbidden.

Though it's never stated directly, records strongly imply that it was Ri'neref who chose where the city would be established. He seemed to base his decision on two factors (which probably made the decision an easy one). First was the line of the Great Zero. It seemed an obvious spot to base the city, with the most important religious structures being directly on the line and the rest of the city surrounding its center. The second factor was a group of waterfalls that flowed from the ceiling of the cavern to an area adjacent to the line of the Great Zero. The fresh flowing water was perfect for drinking.

A new Writer's Guild (with fairly different rules than the one that had existed on Garternay) was constructed almost immediately (8 DE) under the direction of Ri'neref. By the year 100 DE Ri'neref had directed the re-creation of the 18 Major Guilds.⁶ The Guilds were dedicated to Yahvo on "The Day of the Circle," a celebration not only of the completion of the Major Guilds, but a celebration of New Guilds, which Ri'neref believed were "healthier" than those that existed in Garternay.

"Guilds that have been established to please Yahvo and not themselves. . . ." Ri'neref said.⁷ Certain records point to the Guilds on Garternay becoming extremely competitive with one another and focusing more upon having the best facility than

carrying out their duty to Yahvo and the people. In an effort to curb that kind of competition, Ri'neref implemented a list of restrictions upon Guild construction. The restrictions included guidelines pertaining to placement (facing the Great Zero), size, shape, and minor visual guidelines.

Though one of Ri'neref's top priorities was construction of a Temple, there were disagreements as to specifics, causing numerous delays in the finalization of construction plans. Eventually, construction was started in 48 DE and the Temple was completed in 63 DE. Known as the Regeltovokum, the Temple to Yahvo was meant as a place of worship as well as a reminder of the prophesied Great King who would come to them soon.⁸

Ri'neref also made it a priority to install massive fans that would supply the cavern with fresh air. Natural openings existed but it was quickly discovered that they did not supply ample circulation for the cavern. As a result, massive shafts and fans were built and installed over a thirty-year period between 84 and 114 DE. It should be noted that numerous records point to a small group of D'ni disappearing upon completion of the fans. It is most often assumed that they remained on the surface of Earth to live.

Throughout his reign, records point to multiple occasions on which Ri'neref refused to build a palace for himself. Instead, he lived in a fairly basic home, similar in fashion to most of his fellow citizens and made it especially clear that until Yahvo had a new home, he could not allow himself one. Although, even after the Temple was completed, Ri'neref refused to build a palace, always focusing more on the religious and government sites. Ri'neref's own philosophy centered on the fact that it was much easier to focus on Yahvo and his wishes when circumstances were difficult and struggles more abundant. It was strongly believed that Ri'neref's refusal to build a palace was an expression of that philosophy.

In 120 DE, Ri'neref died of apparent heart complications. He was 327 years old. Though he had married, he left no children. As a result, he chose one of his apprentices, named Ailesh, to succeed him.

Journal: King Ailesh



This journal was discovered in the DRC field office on a D'ni rooftop, which was reached via a Linking Stone in Lower Gira.

Ailesh took the throne in coronation ceremonies in the year 120 DE at the age of 170. Though it seems Ailesh had never been a member of the Writer's Guild on Garternay, he had spent the first fifty years of his life with Ri'neref (after his own dismissal) working on the Book of D'ni. When the D'ni Writer's Guild was formed in the year 8 DE, Ri'neref made sure Ailesh was placed in charge as the first Grand Master of the Guild.

As Grand Master, he had worked closely with Ri'neref in the writing of the new Guild of Writer's Oath. The Oath, which was what every member promised to live by, ended up staying in existence (with few minor changes) until 9400 DE.

Records indicate that Ailesh modeled his life very closely to Ri'neref's. He refused to build himself a palace until a Common Library was opened; as he strongly supported a place where all citizens could have access to Books. Though there was some minor disagreement on minor issues the building was eventually finished in 233 DE. Although, like his mentor, Ailesh still refused to build himself a palace.

The reign of Ailesh was extremely similar to that of Ri'neref. There was still great excitement for the new ideals and laws of D'ni, and thus great support for Ailesh, making his reign a very smooth one.

Before his third son was born in 256 DE, records indicate that there was a bit of public apprehension over who the next King would be. Ailesh's two eldest sons were fairly rebellious and neither seemed good candidates for the throne, at least in the public's opinion. However, as Ailesh's third son grew, it became apparent to the public (although records never give specific reasons) that the boy closely followed his father's ideals. Ailesh must have agreed with public opinion as it was his third son who he selected to succeed him.

Ailesh died of natural causes at the age of 350.

NOTES

1. Taken from the *Memoirs of Ailesh*.
2. From the *Oath of the New Guild of Writers*, written by Ri'neref.
3. Taken from the journals of Grand Master Najun of the Guild of Legislators.
4. Garternay's sun was dying and would eventually cause a rapid decrease in temperature, making it an uninhabitable Age.
5. The Great Zero itself was usually based on a prominent natural landmark within an Age. From the Great Zero a line was drawn, usually toward magnetic north, to aid in navigation, construction, etc.
6. It should be noted that the 18 Major Guilds of D'ni were not necessarily the same as the 18 that had existed on Ronay. In fact, they were probably much different. Though there is no information that details the Major Guilds of Ronay, we do know that the Guilds were meant to be flexible and serve the people in the needs of their time.
7. Taken from a transcript of Ri'neref's speech on the first Day of the Circle.
8. The prophetic work the Regeltavok of Oorpah, a book Ri'neref believed strongly in, dealt with numerous prophesies of a Great King who would be sent by Yahvo to guide the people.

Journal: King Shomat



This journal was discovered in the DRC field office on a D'ni rooftop, which was reached via a Linking Stone in Lower Gira.

Shomat took the throne in the year 300 DE (D'ni Era) at the age of 44. Up to the point of his coronation, he had been a member of the Guild of Writers. He continued his study of the Art through private mentors for a number of years after his coronation. It was the lack of proper Guild instruction that most D'ni historians attribute the distorted views Shomat later took on.

It was an up-and-down reign, partly due to a tremendous tension that seemed to exist between himself and his older brothers. Both of the brothers, though they had little respect, did everything in their power to make Shomat's reign tumultuous.

One of the first actions Shomat ordered was construction of a palace. When it was completed in 347 DE, Shomat moved in with his family, although his brothers refused, and maintained their own homes. Such an act was regarded as a tremendous disrespect to a family and only served to widen the gap between Shomat and his brothers.

Furthering tensions not only within Shomat's family but within the culture as well was the lavishness of the palace. Ornate gardens were present inside the physical grounds and "garden" Ages were written as well, linking from within the palace. Rumors abounded that some of these "garden" Ages were even wiped of their inhabitants in order to provide Shomat with relaxation. Whether true or not, Shomat often spoke publicly of the need for Ages to serve D'ni. This was a first for the society and a direct contradiction to what the Guilds taught: the D'ni were to "serve" the Ages.

It seems that eventually the tension became too much. Some say it drove Shomat mad. In 387 DE both his brothers disappeared and were never found again. It was commonly presumed that Shomat wrote a Death Book to which both of his brothers were linked into, although it could never be proven.

Regardless, it was one of the first major challenges for the people of D'ni and they reacted quickly. A prophetess¹ was supplied

to Shomat in 400 DE in an attempt to guide him in the ways of Yahvo.² For the 155 remaining years of his reign, it seems that most people believed Shomat became a better King. The prophetess became an excellent mentor for Shomat and eventually convinced him to choose the son of one of his close friends as the heir to the throne. His own children were admittedly "out of control." As it turns out, it was the bloodline of that child that led to the birth of the Great King years later.

Shomat died of natural causes at the age of 299.

NOTES

1. Women were generally seen as much better communicators with Yahvo than men. As a result, most prophets were women.
2. The choosing of prophetesses, as guides for the Kings, started with Shomat and became tradition for all the remaining Kings of D'ni. It was usually up to the King as to which prophet or prophetess he would seek for wisdom.

Journal: King Naygen



This journal was discovered in the DRC field office on a D'ni rooftop, which was reached via a Linking Stone in Lower Gira.

Naygen took the throne in 2356 DE at the age of 86. Naygen did much to encourage the growth of the Major Guild of Fine Artists, as well as the seeking of the other "truths." The year 2500 DE (1,000 years after the death of the Great King) would mark the peak of what some would call "the religious confusion."¹ There were over 2,000 registered sects and the original beliefs of Ri'nerf were known by very few. Naygen was clearly not one of them.

It is 2397 DE that most officially marked the start of the D'ni Renaissance. In that year, the Eamis Theatre Company hosted the first play written by the playwright Sirreh. The play dealt with the Pento War and the Great King himself and was one which Naygen praised. It ended up being sold out for three straight weeks and marked not only the start of theatre as a popular entertainment source within the culture, but also the beginning of the Pento War subject, which would go on to become one of the most dealt with topics of their history in their Art.

In 2408 DE, the 33-year-old musician Airem began selling out concert halls, marking the beginning of yet another career of one of the great D'ni artists. His music also dealt much with the Great King, many times ridiculing him. Naygen praised his people for being able to express "their true feelings in such wonderful displays of art."²

In 2488 DE, the first successful extrusion tests were carried out by the Guild of Miners, and to great applause from the public. Naygen used the occasion to "benefit everyone." He appointed the Guild of Miners as a Major Guild replacing the Guild of Fine Artists. He then split the Guild of Fine Artists up into the Minor Guilds of Sculptors, Artists, Actors, and Musicians. The split was to encourage growth in mining as well as the arts, two major causes of Naygen throughout his reign. His proposal was strongly supported by Sirreh and Airem, as well as other artists, who viewed it as an excellent opportunity for the growth of their respective fields.

In 2500 DE, Naygen proposed the construction of a new Council chamber for the Guilds. Somewhat surprising was that he suggested it should be built over the Tomb of the Great King. The proposal was met with little opposition,³ and construction began two years later. In 2504 DE, the Tomb of the Great King was barely visible, a tremendous symbol of what D'ni had become.

Later it was discovered that within the Council chamber was a massive vault, protected by "puzzles" of a sort. The tomb had always been known for its patterns, some of which were claimed to have prophetic messages. Naygen apparently became enamored with the patterns and spread them throughout the unseen portions of the chamber as well as the seen. Though the public knew very little of the vault at the time of construction, years later it was found to contain a tremendous amount of royal wealth, something Naygen often publicly encouraged. Of course, most were not able to save the amounts Naygen did, but still the idea of saving one's money for future generations was strongly encouraged by him.

Naygen died in 2533 DE at the age of 263, leaving the throne to his third son. In memorial to Naygen, Sirreh wrote another of the more popular of his plays entitled "Our Great King." It was the first play performed by the Minor Guild of Actors in 2535 DE.

NOTES

1. Taken from the journal of Tevahr in 3075.

2. From a speech by Naygen, christening the Minor Guild of Musicians.

3. Though the official Church registered a complaint, it seemed there was little heart behind it. Apparently, even a prophetess of Naygen supported the proposition.

Journal: King Demath



This journal was discovered in the DRC field office on a D'ni rooftop, which was reached via a Linking Stone in Lower Gira.

Demath took the throne in 4692 DE at the age of 154. Though the public was generally not happy with the reign of Ji, it appears as though they were pleased with his choice of Demath to succeed him.¹

Demath had joined the Guild of Maintainers at the age of five (as most did) and risen to the level of Guild Master by the time he was chosen as King. The selection was a surprise to much of the public, and apparently even to Demath himself. It was not a post he had especially desired to have.

Almost immediately, Demath ordered a ban on all unnecessary links (to be enforced by the Maintainers) while the Council carried out emergency meetings, trying to decide their stance on the outsiders.

In these meetings, the Council concluded that relations with the outsiders would continue, but with much stricter restrictions and guidelines. The list was long that Demath signed into law and included the restriction of any outsiders operating D'ni machinery or Linking Books.

Perhaps more importantly, the Council and King sent a clear message to all of the factions who were against outsider involvement with D'ni; their ideas would not be tolerated if they led to any infraction of the rules previously established by Loshemanesh, which were to become strictly enforced. And though it was not stated publicly, the Relyimah (meaning "the Unseen") was apparently ordered to double its membership and find any and all who were carrying out illegal activities with the outsiders.

As well, Demath denounced the words of the Watcher as pure rubbish and nothing more than "a desperately lonely man seeking attention."²

In 4721 DE, Demath pushed an amendment that forced the Major Guilds to accept a percentage of students who passed all entrance exams but could not afford the steep prices.³ It was the first such action in the history of D'ni and one that many seemed

to question, especially the Guilds themselves. However, Demath was able to convince them it was a necessity for the society and one to which they "cautiously agreed."⁴

In 4724 DE, records point to over ten separate groups being convicted of the Loshemanesh Laws (as they had come to be called). Most agreed that the Relyimah played a large role in the convictions although there are no official records of their involvement. Regardless, each of the convicted was sentenced to solitary confinement on Prison Ages. The convictions must have carried a powerful impact on the society, as the public still knew very little of the Relyimah (if anything at all), and thus had no idea how so many convictions were occurring. As one writer said, "There were stories of dark shadows and mysterious creatures . . . for those carrying out such activities . . . it was said that the eyes of Demath saw everything while his arms took anyone he wanted."⁵ The crime rate, especially pertaining to the Loshemanesh Laws, steadily lowered until 4752, when there were only three recorded convictions.

In 4784 DE, an assassination attempt was carried out against Demath resulting in the death of two members of the Relyimah, who saved Demath's life in the process. The perpetrators were found and two years later, Demath ordered their execution. It was the first execution of its kind and met with little resistance from the public or Council. The two men were apparently linked into a Death Age, permanently ending their lives. Though most agreed with the execution, those who were against outsider involvement to begin with now felt even stronger in their case. Now, they argued, "D'ni is killing itself, for the sake of the outsiders."⁶

In 4826, Demath was rewarded for his efforts pertaining to the acceptance policies of the Major Guilds. The first of the Guild of Stone Masons' "non-paying" members headed the effort to devise early fusion-compounding technology, a building block for the eventual development of Nara. Demath praised the Guild and the numerous opportunities that all citizens of D'ni now had to benefit their society.⁷

In 4843 at the age of 305, Demath passed away leaving the throne to his first-born son.

NOTES

1. Some argued that Ji didn't make the choice of Demath but that Grand Master Imas of the Guild of Maintainers made it. The matter was never officially settled although most contribute the choice to Ji.
2. From Demath's speech, explaining to the people the findings of the Council meetings.
3. By that time, the Major Guilds had become extremely expensive and a large majority of the population, even if qualified to join the Guilds, had no way to afford it.
4. Taken from the private journals of Guild Master Reshan of the Guild of Archivists.
5. From *Revealing the Unseen*, written by Besharen in 5999.
6. Goshen, leader of the cult group Blood of Yahvo, made the comment in a public speech.
7. The comments were made by Demath at the public announcement of the fusion-compounding technology.

Journal: King Me'emmen



This journal was discovered in the DRC field office on a D'ni rooftop, which was reached via a Linking Stone in Lower Gira.

Me'emmen took the throne in 5240 DE at the age of 83.

One of the biggest announcements of Me'emmen's reign came rather quickly and was offered by the Guild of Miners and Stone Masons (who had worked together). In 5307 they revealed Nara', which had been created in a laboratory weeks earlier. Nara offered tremendous opportunities for mining and construction and ended up having a massive impact on future opportunities for D'ni. Even at the time of its release, there was apparently much excitement about its potential.

In 5312 DE, disease broke out in the industrial district of D'ni, most likely originating in the Age of Yasefe.² The outbreak caused widespread panic as many predicted another plague similar to what had occurred during the 2100s. Fortunately, the illness was not nearly as lethal as the aforementioned, and the Guild of Healers reacted extraordinarily fast in finding a cure. Regardless, there was again a new push to at least separate the Nehw'eril District³ far away from the city proper.

Me'emmen apparently liked the idea quite a bit and encouraged the Surveyors to begin looking into such an expansion.

In 5359 DE, the D'ni received another great reason to begin major expansion and it came in the form of Stone Tooth. It was the second of the Great Diggers and quite a bit more powerful and technologically advanced than the older Stone Eater. Me'emmen immediately ordered the Guild of Miners to begin "clearing" an area (along with Stone Eater) for a new industrial district replacing Nehw'eril. It was not until 5475 DE that actual construction was begun on the new industrial section Uran.

Less than a hundred years after Stone Tooth, in 5473 DE, the Guild of Maintainers announced that the newly discovered Deretheni could be used to create much improved, and much more protective, Maintainer suits. Though such an announcement may not seem especially important, the new suits ended up having a great impact on D'ni culture. Since the Maintainers were able to take bigger risks with the types of Ages they could explore, the Guild of Writers were allowed to be a bit more liberal in their writing, and a new breed of Age was begun.⁴

During Me'emmen's reign "Words" became a common topic of discussion and attention was again given to the older temples. Evidence points to numerous remodels and renovations of many of the secular temples that had been built years earlier on the "new" line of the Great Zero.

It seems that Me'emmen himself paid little attention to the religious pulse of his people being much more interested in technological advancements and city expansion to care.

Once Me'emmen felt that Stone Eater and Stone Tooth were no longer needed, he recommended using them to build an underground tunnel connecting The Island to the city proper, and minimizing the need for boat travel. His proposition was not embraced by any means, especially by the upper classes who were living on The Island. Apparently there were a number of protests, for fear of the affect the tunnel could have on The Island. The proposal was also rejected by most of the Guilds, causing Me'emmen to not force it.

In 5500 DE, the first imports from other Ages were linked to the new Uran District, much farther from the city. Uran was said to be "a tremendous improvement over the older Nehweril . . . much more advanced . . . much safer," and there was tremendous celebration on the day of its "opening."⁵ Security was tight in the new district, as it was revealed later that the Relyimah had uncovered a variety of plots intended to display some of the faction's disagreement with the district.

In 5540 DE, Me'emmen's only son became extremely ill and ended up passing away six months later. As a member of the Guild of Healers, Ashem was often among the first to investigate new Ages to make sure of their safety in relation to disease. As a result of his death, the Age was not approved until a cure could be found. Me'emmen considered the actions of his son heroic and changed the name of the Uran District to Ashem'en a year after his death.

It was said that the death left Me'emmen "deeply saddened . . . devoid of the excitement he had shown throughout his reign."⁶ Many said it forced him to the Prophetess Trisari.⁷ Me'emmen apparently spent much time with Trisari in his last days and was able to die a content man "because of her."⁸

Me'emmen died in 5549 DE at the very ripe age of 392 and choose his nephew, probably on recommendation of Trisari, to succeed him.

Journal: King Asemlef



This journal was discovered in the DRC field office on a D'ni rooftop, which was reached via a Linking Stone in Lower Gira.

Asemlef took the throne in 5999 DE at the age of 54.

Asemlef inherited a people who were philosophically confused (The Watcher vs. Gish vs. The Great King/Tevahr), but technologically advancing (many great construction, mining, and scientific inventions), expanding within the cavern at a great rate, and moving toward diminishing the involvement of the outsiders within their culture. As well, the fighting that had scarred their past was at a minimum.¹

Asemlef continued the peaceful trends by attempting to isolate no one, but instead welcoming everyone and any beliefs they might have had.

It seems he took no stance on any of the varying religious ideologies being passed around and allowed any and all religious factions equal access to property, government help, etc.

While disregarding no beliefs, he was able to hold his own, some of which were unknown to D'ni up to that point. Though never stated publicly by Asemlef, common opinion and historical records point toward numerous servants being used by Asemlef, most brought from outside Ages. More so, were the apparent challenges Asemlef held with these "servants." Details are hard to find, but it seems as though these challenges ranged from hunts, by Asemlef himself, to gladiator-style battles between the servants. It should be noted that regardless of what actions occurred, there was little public outcry against them.

Instead of philosophical or religious beliefs, Asemlef instead focused on mining expansion, construction of the new districts and offering equal opportunities of culture and social benefits to all classes. As far as outside involvement, Asemlef publicly argued that the order from his father to all of the Guilds was not realistic and that outside involvement would always be needed to some extent. Knowing the comment would anger some of the factions, he

NOTES

1. A metallic gray stone thirty times the density of steel and the hardest of all D'ni stones.
2. Yasefe was mostly forest and provided D'ni with a good portion of its wood supply including the expensive, and rare, Yema.
3. The industrial district was formed during the reign of Needrah and served as an importation center for most outside goods.
4. The newer Ages allowed for much more experimentation with atmospheres, animal life, and energy sources.
5. From the journal of Grand Master Veshar of the Guild of Stone Miners.
6. From the journals of the Prophetess Trisari, assigned to King Me'emmen.
7. It should be noted that prophetesses had been assigned to all of the Kings but, for the most part, had become nothing more than figureheads, rarely consulted.
8. From *Ashem*, written by Ramena in 5589.

became the first King to publicly invite the more extreme factions (who wanted no outside involvement) to his palace for numerous talks on the issues.

Though no decisions were made in the meetings, the meetings themselves apparently calmed the factions and created a better overall feeling that the two could come to a decision in the future.

Around the same time, two key writers from the Writer's Guild left to join the Writers of Yahvo.² Up to that point, the group, who believed it was their duty to write the Perfect Age,³ had been relatively small.

Like the Writers of Yahvo, most of the popular factions or cults of the day focused on Yahvo in one way or another. The old cults (such as The Tree and Sacred Stone) had vanished for the most part leaving way to disagreements in the beliefs of Yahvo for the most part.

Asemlef passed away in 6284 DE at the age of 339 leaving the throne to his third (and youngest) son.

NOTES

1. From *The Line of Kerath*, written by Fhal in 6985.

2. Worth mentioning as the Writers of Yahvo would eventually become one of the three largest sects in all of D'ni.

3. After the Judgment Age, most of D'ni believed one would either end up in the Perfect Age or Jakooth's Age. Obviously, most wanted to live in the Perfect Age, but there were, of course, a variety of beliefs on how that was accomplished.

Journal: King Kerath



This journal was discovered in the DRC field office on a D'ni rooftop, which was reached via a Linking Stone in Lower Gira.

Kerath took the throne in 6731 DE at the age of 54. Kerath is probably the most well known name of all the Kings, not because he was necessarily considered the best, but because he was the last. His name came to represent all of the Kings in the later years, including the renaming of the Arch of the Kings to the Arch of Kerath.

His mother had raised him to follow the teachings of Gish and by the time he took the throne he was believed to be a whole-hearted believer in the Followers. Because of that, and the experience of watching his father interact with his advisors, Kerath had decided from an early age that a King was no longer the correct way that D'ni should be led. At least, he argued, not until the true Great King would come.

The fact that Kerath, in a single reign, was able to convince his people that the way they had been ruled for thousands of years was wrong and should be changed should be considered nothing short of miraculous. Kerath carefully crafted his arguments as a benefit for the Guilds more than anything else. After all, he argued, "D'ni is the Guilds . . . let us be protected by their fortress and be ruled by their wisdom."¹

It was hard for the Guilds not to support a proposal that removed the King from the highest authority and replaced him with Five Lords, Lords that would be automatically chosen from the Grand Masters of the Guilds. It gave all of the power of D'ni to the Guilds and there were only a few Grand Masters who seemed to disagree. Those few were known as faithful followers of the Great King and Ri'neref, who had always supported the role of Kings.

Fortunately, for Kerath, though his people believed a variety of different philosophical ideologies, only those who faithfully followed the original teachings of Ri'neref and the Great King were disturbed at the thought of no King. And it was the majority of D'ni who no longer followed those beliefs but instead those of Nemiya, Gish, The Watcher and various others. As a result it was a cultural impact that the public had to overcome and not a religious one.²

Kerath, attempting to further please the Guilds, recommended new renovations and additions to the Council Chamber and construction of a new Guild Hall, meant to celebrate the new power that would be theirs—a symbol of the new power of the Guilds and Lords and further insult to the Great King, burying his memory even further under government construction.

Construction began in 6970 DE on the new Guild Hall. There was no better symbol of the attitude of the D'ni in 6970 DE. The Tomb of the Great King was further buried under massive buildings dedicated to government and the Guilds.

By the end of his reign, Kerath had convinced a majority of D'ni of his own beliefs. Most claimed to be followers of Gish and his writings, and most viewed the outsiders as a threat. "If not now, then soon," Kerath often said.³

After his death, Kerath's words would be proven true with the onset of the Mee-Dis War. Outside factions would invade with attempts to destroy the Ink-Making and Book-Making Guilds and almost succeed. By the time the war would end, there would be few left who did not follow Gish and thus believe in the end of most outsider involvement. The discovery that conservative factions had led to the start of the Mee-Dis War would come much later, when it was far too late to alter the conservative trends.

Regardless, in 6977 DE Kerath abdicated the throne and gave over the power of the Kings to the first Five Lords of D'ni History. They were Lord Taeri of the Guild of Messengers, Lord Hemelah of the Guild of Healers, Lord Moeth of the Guild of Caterers, Lord Kedri of the Guild of Writers, and Lord Korenen of the Guild of Analysts. Kerath died eight years later.

The time of the Kings was over.

NOTES

1. Taken from Kerath's public speech in which he first proposed the idea.
2. From *The First Five*, written by Tarvis in 7000.
3. From *How They Came; A Detailed Look at What Started the Mee-Dis War*, by Jamen. Written in 7201.

Journal: Shomat Story



This journal was found above a tunnel entrance in Eder Kimo, near the puffer grove. It was apparently stolen from the DRC field office on a D'ni rooftop.

The Story of Shomat—taken from one book 43C.
(We have yet to name it.)

Translation: Nick

First Draft

At the age of 121, Shomat had resided in his Palace of the Kings for twenty years. Though the palace had taken forty-five years to construct and new additions (?) had been added every year, Shomat was still not pleased with all that surrounded him. His palace was larger than any structure in the city, and the gardens of his palace were more beautiful than any other living plants that the people had ever known. But Shomat demanded more from those who created his home and his gardens.

Shomat sent messengers demanding that Lemash, the head (this word seems to define some kind of leader of the servants—although they never defined them as servants. Have to ask Dr. Watson) of his palace come to his gardens immediately. And Lemash obeyed. "Yes, my King, what is it that you require of me?"

"Do you see these bulbs of orange and leaves of brown that surround me?"

"Of course, my King. They are unlike any that dwell in this cavern."

"Do you see the intricate stone that surrounds me?" asked Shomat.

"Of course, again there is none like them in the cavern."

And Shomat suddenly became angry, cursing at his servants (not really servants but it'll have to do) and screaming at those in his presence.

"Who do you think that I am? Do you think I have never used the Books to see the beauties that lie outside this cavern? I have written these Books myself, even while you have seen me trained by the Grand Master! And yet you act as though I should be pleased at the beauty that now surrounds me. Beauty that comes only from this cavern, this cavern of no light, no warmth, and no color? Do you think stone and darkness are all that I require? Who do you think that I am?"

"My King, what is it that you ask of me?"

"Bring to me Grand Master Kenri. Together you will work (work in a writing sense?) with him and create for me real beauty. Roaring water. Colors beyond imagination. Living creations, not stone! These are the gardens that I demand! Now go and bring them to me."

And so Lemash went to Kenri, Grand Master of the Guild of Writers, and together they created an Age whose beauty was beyond that which any man had seen before. And together they brought their King to the Age, eight months (these are D'ni months) after his request had been made.

Shomat was pleased with all that he saw. Broad leaves of green and yellow, flowers of every color, and roaring waters of blue and turquoise like the most colorful stones of D'ni. And he promoted Lemash (as he was already head, I'm not sure his promotion but the word is fairly clear) and made Kenri his most prized Grand Master in all of D'ni. Shomat spent every day on his new Age, and he asked for more of them and he asked his architects to provide structures on these Ages.

And while this happened, Shomat's brothers continued to grow more jealous and their anger turned to rage. They had not been invited to live in the palace of their brother and now, though multitudes of common citizens were invited to the gardens of Shomat, never once were they allowed to visit. And their hearts burned toward their King and brother.

So it was that Shomat was sitting alone in his Garden Age when two creatures approached him. Though they resembled men, they walked on their arms and legs and moved quickly. Shomat was frightened upon seeing the creatures and immediately called for his guards. The creatures ran from the guards but Shomat ordered his guards to follow them and the guards obeyed. It was not until the next day that they returned. They claimed they had seen a city with hundreds of these creatures living in it, conversing with one another, and organizing armies. These armies lived inside of the Garden Age of Shomat. And Shomat was very afraid.

Shomat ordered the men who had seen the village to be put in prison (not sure if Book or physical prison) for what they saw. And he called his most trusted advisor (?) Lemash to his residence in the city. Upon hearing of the creatures and their organization, Lemash too was frightened.

"We have no choice but to burn the Book," Lemash recommended. "You know this Age is not ours, if it is already inhabited. You know the rules of our Writing, and of our Books, and of our people."

But Shomat's heart was not moved by the words of Lemash and he grew more angry and enraged. "The world was created by me, for me. If there are others who exist, they will have to be killed. It is D'ni now."

So Shomat ordered for his brothers to be brought into his palace and he informed them of his dilemma. Shomat asked his brothers if they would kill those who lived on his Garden Ages and he bribed them with talk of power and authority. And so they agreed even though they hated their brother.

And the brothers of Shomat traveled to the Age, and went to the creatures to destroy them. But in talking with the creatures they became convinced that the creatures should not be killed but instead they should be used to destroy their brother. And so they devised a plan to kill their brother, the King.

While Shomat waited in his Palace in the city, his brothers appeared to him.

"We have finished," they announced. "The creatures are all dead."

Shomat was pleased to hear such words from his brothers and on the outside he showed love to them. "My brothers, I have done much wrong to you. There have been many times that I have not treated you like even those who work in my palace. And I am sorry for these actions. But today you have proven that you do not hold anger like I do. You are better than me. You have shown me favor and so I ask you to accept what I have to offer you. Please accept this gift."

And Shomat gave his brothers a Linking Book. Its pages were filled with descriptions of beauty and life, like Shomat's own Garden Age.

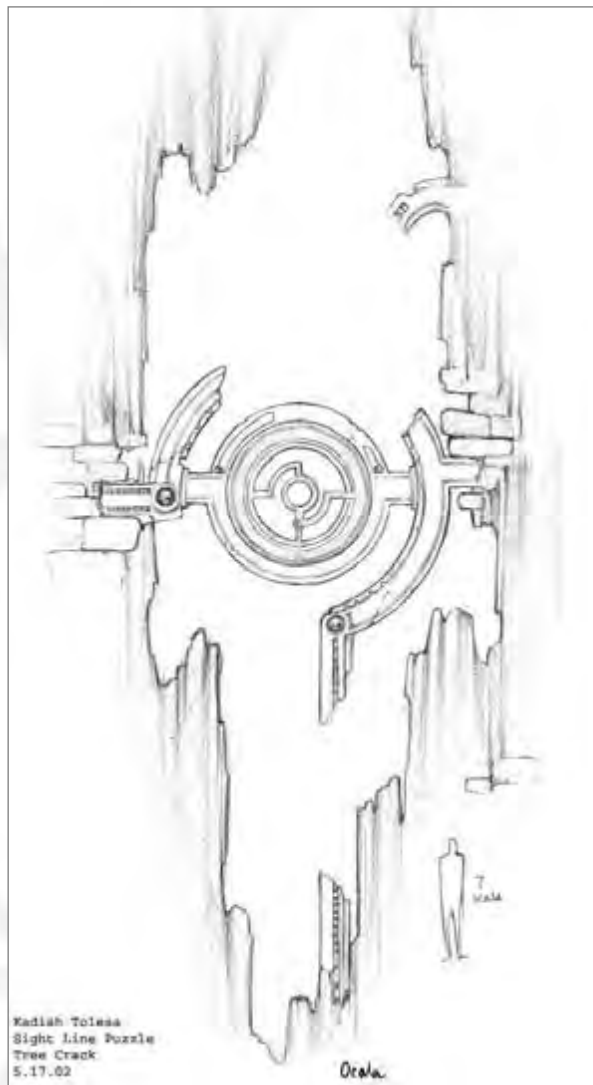
"And it will be kept here in this palace where you will live now."

Filled with pleasure, and forgetting their hate for Shomat, his brothers went to the Age quickly. And it was there that they died thinking that they had fooled their brother. Shomat burned the Book in his own fire, forever erasing his brothers and their deceit from his mind.

And Shomat ordered the Grand Master to change his Garden Age so that those who lived there would die. And Kenri obeyed the King even though he knew it was wrong. And his life was filled with turmoil until he died.

But Shomat, though he did what was wrong, continued to live and pursue all that he wanted.

The story continues but it seemed a good point to stop. I'd like to go over this a few more times with some better translators—maybe even Dr. Watson. I filled in a lot of words as best I could for now.



To D'ni Journals

Every note, journal, or other written piece of information that I found during my return to D'ni is included in this chapter. Some of the writings were essential for solving D'ni's many riddles, while others served to deepen my understanding of its long-dead culture. They are reprinted here in the order in which I found them.

Yeesha's Journal



I found this journal in one of the bookshelves in my Relto upon returning there at the start of my journey. It was written by Yeesha and served as her commentary on the failed DRC reconstruction of D'ni.

There were some
who came here
thinking
they could build the tree.
But only a dead tree is built.
Life cannot be assembled from remains.

And now these builders
are gone.
What has happened
to them?
Are they now
part of the remains,
or have they become
part of the tree?

For the tree does grow,
the great cavern breathes,
voices in places
in the great void.
The called
continue their journey here.
Building or growing
it is their choice.

One new book...
given to
open up paths in the cavern
given to
open up the origin
given to
open up a glimpse of the future.

Douglas Sharper's 2004 Journal



This journal sat on the desk in Douglas Sharper's secret D'ni office, which is accessed via the Linking Book in the aquarium in his Teledahn office. The journal gave me the clues I needed to find Sharper's spy room Linking Book in the Teledahn slave caves. It also contained Zandi's coordinate, which allowed me to complete my journey.

1.23.04-Though seeing the Patriots go to another Super Bowl (and hopefully win) is obviously on my mind, compared to what I've returned to, here in D'ni...what happened? I'm hearing that the DRC is leaving the whole thing behind. Watson is not returning. Kodama, Laxman, Sutherland, all of the little guys, Nick, Simpson...I never saw it coming. Engberg even. They are claiming funds, but I wonder if it was something more than that.

I thought I would have a lot to write today, but my mind is going everywhere. I've come to love the place. The offices. The creatures. The people. The game. Even the DRC. I'm stunned. Is it really going to come to an end?

1.26.04-The disagreements of the past are no longer separating us, obviously. Had a good talk with Kodama and Laxman today. They are disappointed and saddened. Frustrated.

Poor Laxman is still working on the KIs. Says he's standardizing KIs and implementing some kind of remote upgrade. Except for that, they are beginning to close things down.

They seem to know what happened to Watson. Apparently he spoke to Kodama, at least once, since that day long ago. Neither wanted to go there so I let it go.

Regardless, there was a glint in their eyes. Maybe not too surprising for Laxman, but Kodama? The man never has an ounce of glint. It seems they have a journey they'd like to take.

1.30.04-Laxman must have seen the light. KI lattice is going down to base features before he heads up.

I'm heading up to the surface myself. Houston for the Super Bowl. Another championship is just what I need right now. I'll be back.

2.5.04-Champions! Again! Not sure I could have asked for a better game, regardless of the halftime debacle. I have to admit though, I thought the big victory would be enough, but I still find myself troubled down here.

2.9.04-2175. 58.-81. What is it? A coordinate? And why is Zandi sending this thing out? The gathered will tell the path of the shell? What?

Spoke with Nick last night. He's already heading up, back to the Northwest somewhere. I'd like to see the kid again someday. Good kid. I'll miss him. I think Fioca has left as well. Another good guy.

2.11.04-Went to the spy room today and...not quite the same anymore. I missed the intrigue and found myself saddened at the thought of it all going away. No reason to go through the trouble of making the backside secure anymore. Looking back, I realize how lax I was. Anyone could have found the Book. I assumed the backside of Teledahn was secure but it obviously wasn't. Not if they were all seeing Shroomie. And to think, if there had been two of them, all they had to do was close the door and their friend would have seen the Book. I guess none of it matters now. Don't suppose anyone will be going to the slave caves anytime soon. Oh well....

I'm a little ashamed that I'd forgotten about Phil. I suppose the surface trips, football games, and, obviously, events down here had caused me to forget about him. His Relto Book was in the spy room. I paid the area a little visit. A memorial of sorts. I assume he is officially dead now, although I should ask the boys.

2.13.04-My god, I may have killed him. Is this...

2.28.04-There is no life here. Literally and figuratively. They've all gone. And I'm stuck alone with the thought that Phil may have died because of me.

I've talked to a number of the DRC about it. They never found a body but apparently a destroyed KI was found at the bottom of where the precipice once stood. No one wanted to say it but I've had the dream twice now.

Phil standing up there, confident in his ability to return to his Relto at any time. The first crack. Still confident. Enjoying the thrill. Another crack of stone and the tower begins to break. He reaches down to grab the Relto Book, just to be ready. It's then he realizes it's gone. He turns to escape but he's already falling. A cry for help, that those who were there heard. He has no chance, because I took the book. The rubble buries him forever.

No. I have to believe it didn't happen that way.

3.1.04-2175. 58.-81 has appeared on my desk again. I thought everyone was gone. Zandi? If I don't do anything else, I have to find this place before I leave here. I'm supposed to. Zandi wouldn't send it out if there wasn't a reason for it. If it is him. Maybe I'll find some answers. Watson, Phil, the DRC, the failure. Do these coordinates hold the answers?

Is someone else here? I'm not sure I'm alone anymore. I'm going to have to be careful.



Phil's Journal

This journal was found in Phil's Relto, which I reached via Phil's Relto Linking Book in Sharper's spy room. Although Phil's comments are enigmatic, it helps to explain why some DRC members became disenchanted with the restoration and gives the impression that there is another way to go about the exploration of D'ni's past.

returning...

it is odd being here again after losing myself

i don't feel like part of this, and yet i
feel like i am here for something

odd

this restoration is not right
it's not that it's wrong
just that it will only rebuild
not restore

rebuilding is about slicing and fixing on
the outside

rebuilt trees make fences and walls

restoration is about growth and life on the
inside

restored trees make fruit and shade

she is making sure that
the tree has begun to grow again

what is d'ni?

what is this kingdom?
i have read of d'ni the people
i have lived in d'ni the place
i have spoken d'ni the language

a kingdom is made of both life and belief
it is only real with both
lives without belief is a kingdom of cards

only waiting to fall

belief without lives is a kingdom of dead

only waiting to live

i know a little
but i only think i know more
i see a little
but i only think i see more
i understand a little
but i only think i understand more

i seek a little
and i know i will find more

i can never know see and understand
i can only ever know see and understand more

i talked to many people today
but i don't really know them
how can i know other people?
they are revealed only in their words and
actions
i suppose only really in their actions
words are easy
i talked to many people today

i am growing
and i am growing anxious
and i am growing weary
and i am growing closer
and i am growing up
and i am growing impatient
and i am growing leery
and i am growing wise
and i am growing less
and less

my seeking feels like it comes to an end
now i feel like i am called higher
to become lower

i will find them again
they are calling me
i don't know why but i will know when i find them

i remember what they showed me before
and i must find that again

i hear them even now
calling me
she has heard them
i can't resist

i am going

Journals of the Kings



The Monument of the Kings in Ae'gura

The following 26 journals of the D'ni kings were translated by the DRC and placed in the monument of the kings on Ae'gura Island. Combined with the king journals I found during my first journey on a DRC rooftop worksite in Ae'gura (and reprinted in my first journal), they provide a remarkably comprehensive account of the time of the D'ni kings. They are presented here in chronological order.



King Ja'reen

Ja'kreen took the throne in the year 555 at the age of 80. By the time of his coronation, he had already reached the rank of Guild Master in the Guild of Stone Masons.

It was Ja'kreen who first publicly stated plans to rebuild the King's Arch¹. In 598, headed by Guild Master Koris of the Guild of Stone Masons, design of the Arch

was begun. In 600, construction started and in 625² the Arch was completed. It was a day of great celebration, as it marked their

first century on Earth and, because of the prophecies, allowed for the passage of the Great King. As a result, from the time of its completion onward, all Kings sailed through the Arch as part of their coronation ceremony.

As construction of the Arch was underway, Ja'kreen planned for construction of the Temple of the Great King. Specifications for the building were recorded in ancient prophecies³, and Ja'kreen made sure that each was followed through to the last span. Construction was finished in 643.

It should be noted that at the time of construction there were apparently quite a few people who questioned the dimensions of the building, calling them "rather odd" and "exorbitant." However, Ja'kreen would hear nothing of their complaints and, in fact, managed to anger quite a few of those who worked on the Temple during its construction⁴. Once the temple was complete, Ja'kreen ordered the transfer of the gold throne from the Temple that Ri'neref had built to the new Temple of the Great King.

In 654, Ja'kreen's wife gave birth to a son. Unfortunately, the boy only lived for ten years before dying of a rare disease⁵. It was not 10 years after the death of the boy that Ja'kreen's wife passed away, also at a young age. The tragedies seemed to have had a devastating affect on Ja'kreen, and in his later years he was known to be easily angered and extremely harsh.

He remarried in 700, and his second wife gave birth to a son 17 years later, followed by two daughters. Records speak of various accusations of abuse toward his children, though nothing was ever proven. Regardless of whether or not there was abuse, it seems he was never able to get over the death of his son and first wife. As one of the prophetesses who advised him wrote in her journals, "He never seemed to really love or appreciate any of them...." though he did leave the throne to the oldest of them.

It was Ja'kreen who encouraged further private construction for The Island in 775, including the J'Taeri District. He named the high-class district after his first son who had died 111 years earlier.

Ja'kreen died of natural consequences in 812 at the age of 337. It was often said that Ja'kreen died a very sad and unsatisfied man.

1. The King's Arch was modeled after a similar design on Garternay. It was prophesied that the Great King would be "welcomed" by the Arch and so its construction was obviously seen as very important.
2. Because D'ni numbers are base 25, the year 625 was very significant.
3. Most were taken from the Regeltavok of Oorpah.
4. As recorded in Guild of Stone Masons' records.
5. It is not known what the disease was. Records only indicate extremely high temperatures and extremely sore and brittle bones.



King Veesha

Veesha took the throne in the year 812 at the age of 95. When Veesha took the throne, he already had two sons of his own and ended up having three more before his death (a large number for D'ni).

Though his father had completely rejected religion in his later years, Veesha was an extremely religious

man who, some say, tried too hard to push his convictions on the people and, in the end, probably pushed many away. In fact, he forced into law a number of strict guidelines pertaining to marriage and adultery, as well as oaths and vows, many of which were removed by his son.

Many say the greatest mark of Veesha's reign concerned the health of his fifth son. The boy was a Maintainer, and at the age of 50, on a routine check of Ages, was almost killed. Though the cause of his near-death is unclear (certain documents point to inhalation of toxic gases), he ended up falling into a deep coma that the Healers said he would never come out of.

In response, Veesha gave a powerful speech, boldly announcing to the people that Yahvo would heal his son and that he would awake again. Despite opposition from the Church, two prophetesses who advised him, and the Guild of Healers, Veesha maintained his faith for over three years until the "impossible" happened and his son awoke.

Though many disagreed with Veesha's religious convictions, "there was not a single D'ni, besides Veesha, who was not shocked by the 'awakening' and forced to look again at their own faith in Yahvo."¹

Veesha died of natural consequences in 997 at the age of 280. He left the throne to the "reborn" son, Mararon.

1. From *The Miracle*, written by Teshan in 1072.



King Mararon

King Mararon took the throne in 997 at the age of 73, exactly 20 years after emerging from his long coma. From various speeches and writings, it's obvious Mararon placed a strong value on life. Through his 162 years in

power, it seems he did all he could to emphasize that same value to his people, as well as make the most of his own.

It seems that a main concern of Mararon was the D'ni education system. The fact that so many of his own people were falling by the wayside apparently upset him quite a bit. So, in 1124 when Ti'Lanar (a Guild Master of the Guild of Legislators) submitted his paper "Minor Guilds," Mararon was in immediate agreement with what it said. In the paper, Ti'Lanar wrote "... we are creating a group of people who have no understanding of the D'ni and the strength of our blood. There is the relatively small percentage of those who learn and keep our traditions through the Guilds, and a growing population of fools...."

Mararon, following suggestions within the paper, placed the Common Schools under the Guild of Legislators and began major renovations of that system, including higher standards for instructors and longer workdays. Mararon also raised the time in the Common Schools from 6 years (age 10 to 16) to 15 years (age 5 to 20). From there, instead of entering back into society, as had been the case, students could enter one of the new Minor Guilds that had been proposed by Ti'Lanar and accepted by Mararon. The first of these Guilds included Architecture (a branch of the Guild of Stone Masons), Miners, Educators, and Bankers, among others.

While not pushing education, Mararon was focused on his own life, making sure that he was living it to the fullest. Most historical documents point to addictions to hallucinogenic drinks and various drugs. As well, it seems he carried out numerous affairs, prompting him to throw out the rules that his father had written regarding marriage and adultery. One particular record shows of affairs with prophetesses, although both the prophetesses and the religious community vehemently denied it.¹

The public said little of Mararon's shortcomings, choosing to focus more on the benefits he had brought them than the negatives. He died at the fairly early age of 235 in 1159 from natural consequences. Most expected the early death from his drinking and smoking, although many say it was somehow related to his coma years earlier.

1. Any relationship between the King and his prophetess was extremely looked down upon, as both parties were expected to remain objective with one another and the people.



King Koreen

Koreen took the throne in 1159 at the age of 50. Koreen was the older of Mararon's two sons, and the two brothers were apparently close. His younger brother was a Guild Captain in the Guild of Linguists and the two remained close for much of Koreen's reign.

In 1159 when he took the throne, it would have

been impossible to forecast the turbulent string of events that would start during his reign and not end for some years later.

His grandfather had been an extremely religious man, though not everyone had agreed with his theologies. There were, in fact, a number of groups who had strongly disagreed with Veesha, and though Mararon had not done anything to offend them, during the reign of Koreen they sought to make their own causes more widely known. The most dangerous of those groups was known as the Judges of Yahvo.¹ Though they had existed for some time, it was in 1303 that they began to make a name for themselves.

It all seems to have begun when a writer mysteriously left the Guild of Writers in 1303. A few days later, Books and Ink went missing from the respective Guilds. Koreen ordered tightened security on the Guilds, as well as a massive search for the vanished Writer, but all to no avail.

Unbeknownst to Koreen, the Judges, led by the man Airis, were writing illegal Ages in an attempt to create a race they could control and force to go to war for them. In 1320, the Pento Age was written and the Judges had what they needed.

It was in 1323, with his wife about to give birth to his first son, that Koreen's palace was attacked by a group of Judges, along with warriors from the Age of Pento. Koreen ordered his family out of the palace, as it was quickly being overtaken, and together they traveled to the other side of the city where a special Linking Book was waiting for them.

While traveling through the King's Arch, rumors say, Koreen's wife gave birth to his first son, Ahlsendar.

Koreen continued to live in the city, although his family stayed in a secret Private Age. The city grew more and more dangerous as the Judges began to destroy more of the city and kill more of its citizens. Koreen poured money into the City Guard, as well as the small military of the day, although it seemed too little too late.

In 1352, Koreen was assassinated by a group of Pento warriors being led by Judges. The city was thrown into complete chaos.

1. Known as the RegolantantEok (Judges) the sect believed they were to exercise Yahvo's judgment on those who could not truly understand him as they did.



King Ahlsendar

Ahlsendar (The Great King) was 29 and living on a Private Age with his mother when his father was killed. Instead of immediately joining the city, he remained in the Private Age, apparently at the suggestion of his uncle, who had come to inform Ahlsendar of his father's death. With a few advisors

who kept him updated, Ahlsendar stayed in the Private Age trying to formulate a plan for the war that was now raging in his city. Meanwhile his Uncle, still a member of the Guild of Linguists, was translating much of the Pento language and learning as much as he could about them.

As it turned out, the Judges (with the Pento) claimed control of the D'ni government after the death of Koreen and began to move into other Ages. Ahlsendar, after being briefed by his Uncle on new information, continued to wait. A few weeks later, the waiting appeared to pass off.

Reports came back that the Judges had killed the leader of the Pento for fear he was becoming more powerful and out of control. Unfortunately, the leader had not declared an heir and had left two sons to fight for the throne. This led to civil war within the Pento and a complete lack of focus on the D'ni, leaving the Judges empty handed. As well, what forces there were, were spread out to other Ages and no longer fortified in the city. The public apparently knew Ahlsendar was hiding and with every passing day felt as though the prophecies were coming to fruition.

"Only the stone, while they pass beneath, listens to his cries and comfort her fear. Only the Arch welcomes the reign of the great one who guides us." Ahlsendar, they all knew, had been born directly under the Arch. "A new people, people of light, will bring great havoc to the dark," as they believed the Pento had done. "He remains hidden, while another sits in his throne," was obvious. While the public waited for him, they only grew more willing to fight for him.

Fifteen weeks after the death of his father, Ahlsendar entered the city, for the first time in his life, with a small force. He sailed directly through the Arch to the palace and reclaimed it with relative ease while directing his soldiers and those who joined with him as they saw him enter the city. Immediately, he established "safe-zones" and eventually informed the Pento that he wished to begin negotiations with the Pento warrior Mekarr.¹

Ahlsendar agreed to help Mekarr defeat his brother if, in return, they would return to their home peacefully. Mekarr agreed if Ahlsendar would write them an Age to return to. The deals were signed, and in 1376 Ahlsendar led a force to the Pento Age.

It was there, in the Battle of the Great King, that Ahlsendar led the defeat of Mekarr's brother Timaue and total victory for D'ni. Mekarr turned over two leaders of the Judges and Ahlsendar found the other three in the city. All five were sent to Prison Ages (and the Books burned). Some in the society had demanded execution, but Ahlsendar had refused. Regardless, his coronation ceremony took place a few weeks later, and it was said, "not one of D'ni did not attend the event. Our cheering was as loud as thunder and our pride as solid as the Arch through which he sailed...."²

Throughout his reign, Ahlsendar wrote a good number of books of prophecies and encouraged his people to forget about their old homeland and focus on why they came to D'ni—to start again to focus on pleasing Yahvo and to make good and right decisions. To know Yahvo better should be the focus of their lives, he claimed. It was Ahlsendar who brought them back to the attitude they had maintained during the reign of Ri'nerf.

During his life, there were numerous rumors abounding about Ahlsendar and special linking abilities. Numerous witnesses claimed that he did not need Linking Books to go from one place to another, and numerous others claimed he could link to different spots within an Age. However, none of these rumors were ever confirmed.

There were apparently other rumors, much more quiet, which dealt with Ahlsendar and his relationship with the prophet Nemiya. Though it seemed that Nemiya had great respect for Ahlsendar, the same could not be said concerning Ahlsendar's opinion of Nemiya. Apparently, the Great King had little time for her and often found her advice "foolish" and "childish"³ when he did consult with her. As a result, it seems Nemiya was rarely seen with the Great King and relegated to "figurehead" role for ceremonies and the like. Perhaps surprisingly, Ahlsendar rarely consulted with any other prophets, though he did have the choice.

Unbeknownst to the public who continued to praise him, Ahlsendar was working with the Guilds of Writers and Healers on a plague. It was said that it could be used as a biological weapon in case such action was ever needed in the future. As far as the Pento, the link between their Age and D'ni was still open as Ahlsendar insisted on the continuation of resources from the Pento, although it appears that some of his associates advised against it.

It was in 1466 that Mekarr came to the Palace, through other Books given to him by Judges, and killed Ahlsendar's wife and two sons. Ahlsendar himself killed Mekarr in what records describe as an "astounding battle." Two days later, Ahlsendar ordered the release of the plague to the new Pento Age. Apparently, his counselors advised against it, but he demanded his orders be carried out.

The plague was released, though records don't specify how, and the entire population of Pento died three days later. Unfortunately, it seems as though most of them realized what was happening and did not die before linking to a number of other Ages and infecting numerous other cultures. The sickness did not affect D'ni, although, the Guild of Chemists began to fear that it could mutate to something that would.

Once the public became aware of the plague, they obviously blamed the Pento for the devastation, as they had no knowledge of the Ahlsendar's participation in the plague. All of the Books to which the Pento had had access were gathered together to be forever destroyed.

Then, in 1500, Ahlsendar gathered his people together to "inform them of the truth." It was in that speech that he told them he had created the plague and then ordered its release. At the end of the speech, he asked to be sealed into the Temple of the Great King (as built by Ja'kreen) with any "infected" Books as well as any Books that linked the D'ni to their past (as he had preached they must completely forget). A year later, Ahlsendar was sealed within the Temple, and it was then that the dimensions and shape of the buildings made sense, as it was required to hold massive amounts of Books.

Solath, Ahlsendar's chosen heir, took temporary charge of D'ni while the public waited for the Great King's return.

However, after six months had passed, records state that Solath uncovered the final wishes of Ahlsendar and read them publicly.

Ahlsendar, he read, "... was not to return ..." and, "... for no reason should the seal on the Temple of the Great King ever be broken." In addition, the note stated that Solath should be "officially designated as permanent King." So convincing was Solath's shock upon reading the note, it was said that the thought of the note being a hoax was never considered.⁵

Numerous personal journals and government transcripts state the public's disbelief at the statements. Solath himself said "... for how could He leave us in such a state ..." Though there were many calls to break the seal of the Temple, disobeying a direct command of the Great King was foolish. As well, the Books within the seal were infected Books and, "should not be opened for good reason."⁶

So, in 1502 the Temple of the Great King was renamed the Tomb of the Great King upon orders of Solath, and he was assumed dead. However, most still believed he would return.

1. The two brothers were both fighting for control of the Pento, and Mekarr felt most strongly his people no longer owed the Judges anything. His brother Timaue felt the opposite.
2. From *The Great King*, written by Leshena in 1399.
3. *Nemiya's Legacy*, written by Teman in 1609.
4. Though not done often, it was possible for a King to leave the throne to his successor if he wished to be gone for an extended period of time.
5. No records point to the note being anything but the true wishes of the Great King, but it is interesting to note that it was never even thought of as a fabricated note.
6. As spoken by Grand Master Namis of the Guild of Healers to the Council.



King Solath

Solath took the throne in 1502 at the age of 79. It should be noted that at his coronation ceremony Solath was given a newly designed crown. Ahlsendar had retained his own, and it was common opinion among the D'ni that such a crown should not be worn again.

It should also be stated that Solath's father had been the Grand Master of the Guild of Writers and had helped Ahlsendar create the

Book that was responsible for the plague. Why Ahlsendar chose Solath in particular he never stated.

Regardless, Solath inherited a fairly stable culture, although one that was on the fringe of religious anarchy. The greatest leader of their time had left them and they were a lost people without him to guide them. There were going to be repercussions, although it's doubtful anyone had sensed that they would occur so quickly, most of all Solath.

It was in 1520 that the prophet Nemiya (who had been the Great King's own advisor) wrote *The Book of Nemiya* and sent the culture into religious upheaval. The book denounced the words of the Great King, calling him a fraud and an imposter, and gave

logical arguments to each of his writings. "He killed thousands ... betrayed us ... and left us with no one to guide us ... why do we believe his words ... and expect him to still return ..." the book stated.

At first there was outrage at the writings and Nemiya was declared a fool and heathen, most loudly by King Solath, who also apparently took offense to the writing. In 1527 Nemiya vanished, some said killed by an angry mob and others said taken away by angels.

Regardless, by 1550 there was growing sentiment that Nemiya's book carried some truth. There was a growing tide of disharmony within the people and there was nothing Solath could do to stem it. Those who had always thought the Great King would return were beginning to understand that he would not, and they were beginning to grow angrier at the way he had left them. Suddenly, there were numerous reasons to believe that Nemiya's writings may have carried some truth. "Perhaps we have all been betrayed by the man we once called Great," wrote one anonymous writer.

Looking back, credit should be given to Solath for keeping his people as unified as he did. In 1604, he announced his plans to create Karim, a civic district including an opera house and concert hall. The distraction away from the religious arguments was obvious to the public, but they seemed to welcome it. There was excitement from his proposal, and construction began in 1610. The entire area was not finished until 1650, due to varying construction problems, but when it finally did open, there was a great excitement within the culture.

Solath's wife passed away in 1735, leaving him with two daughters. It was not long after her passing away that he remarried, against the advice of a prophetess, to a younger woman named Jolatha. Jolatha gave birth to Solath's first son in 1748 and though Solath was extremely pleased, many in the religious community were somewhat apprehensive. Public records clearly indicate that Jolatha was a well-known member of an influential cult group known as The Tree, although Solath denied that fact to the day of his death.

The culture remained fairly stable until the death of Solath in 1779. He was 356 years old and left the throne to his first-born son.

King Me'erta

Me'erta took the throne in 1779 at the young age of 31.

There were multiple leaders, many of them from the Church, who publicly feared that the appointment of Me'erta would cause great damage to the already fragile religious culture. Their fears appear to have been justified, as Me'erta's reign was a turbulent one. In fact, it

was often stated that it was his mother Jolatha who ruled the throne for most of Me'erta's 236 years in power. "Me'erta himself had no time to rule D'ni, he was much too busy ... too focused on satisfying the women who ruled him...."¹

In 1817, Me'erta proposed construction of the Temple of the Tree, marking the first time any King officially supported anything other than the original beliefs of Ri'nerref. Just as important, Me'erta suggested that the line of the Great Zero (which had been chosen by Ri'nerref) was inaccurate.² However, he did not officially change the line. He most likely realized such a change would have carried far too many implications upon the society concerning construction, navigation, etc.... His goals (or Jolatha's) in such a remark were simply to question the beliefs of Ri'nerref and encourage the cults to build in a newer section of the city. His remarks were all that were needed. The Temple was built, with strong opposition from some, in 1843. A few years later, Me'erta sanctioned the construction of the Temple of Water and the Temple of the Sacred Stone. Both were finished in 1876, and 1902 respectively. All were built on Me'erta's recommended line of the Great Zero.

As the years passed, cults sprang up everywhere, wreaking havoc on the religious beliefs the D'ni had once had. The Temple of Yahvo was empty and its priests and prophets were small in number, as many had left to pursue other beliefs.

In 1975, Me'erta attempted to change the rules and restrictions of the Writer's Guild, including altering their oath. He claimed his proposals would leave them more "flexible" in their writing and allow the D'ni "to do more."

However, the proposal was met with staunch resistance from Grand Master Tremal, who adamantly opposed the King and, as the records show, refused to change the oath that Ailesh had written. As it turns out, the refusal cost Tremal his life, many say on order from Jolatha. Years later, many viewed Tremal's refusal as one of the most heroic deeds of D'ni history.³ If those rules and oaths had changed, many believed, as Tremal had, the path to Terahnee would not have been long behind. "And that is why we exist," wrote Tremal.

Once Tremal was found dead, the Writer's Guild, as a whole, refused to change the proposed changes in the oath and regulations in support of their fallen comrade. Eventually, Jolatha, through Me'erta, gave up trying.

By far, Jolatha's most destructive action came the year of her death. In 1999, she convinced her son to break the seal on the Tomb of the Great King. Why she wished for such an action is not clear, although numerous possibilities were proposed years later.

Though few in number, there were still some who believed the Great King would return, and Jolatha was infuriated at any power the Great King had. She possibly wanted to prove once and for all that he was dead, an imposter, and fool. Others wrote that she was interested in gaining access to some of the Ancient Books, as the Tree believed they held special power. Still others said she was simply mad, while others claimed she was possessed and an agent of Jakooth.⁴ Regardless, the seal was broken.

The act was carried out in secret, in the dead of night, as even those who opposed the Great King would have found such



an action blasphemous and dangerous. A number of Books were taken from the Tomb and placed in the Temple of the Tree, along with what Jolatha claimed was a piece of robe from the body of the dead King.

Jolatha died two days later, from an unknown illness, while the Books she had taken out remained in the Temple of the Tree. Me'erta quietly ordered the Tomb sealed again (and much stronger). It was said that Me'erta believed his mother had been cursed for entering the grave and he himself was petrified of it, or any mention of the Great King, in the later years of his life.

Me'erta, known as an unfaithful man, died 15 years later with one of his lovers. Guild of Healer's records indicated massive poisoning as the cause of his death. He was 267. His murderer was never discovered, although there were numerous suspects. Though he had many enemies, most agreed it was either his wife, for obvious reasons, or son, who despised his father's weaknesses and lack of judgment. Ironically, it was that son, his oldest, whom he left the throne to.

1. From the journals of the Prophetess Aleshay.
2. Precedent existed for such a claim. On previous Ages, the line of the Great Zero could either point from the Great Zero itself toward magnetic North (as Ri'neraf had chosen) or toward another prominent landmark (as Me'erta suggested it should have been).
3. Grand Master Temas of the Guild of Writers in a speech to the Five Lords in 7034.
4. Jakooth was the equivalent of the devil in the D'ni religion.



King Gan

Gan took the throne in 2015 at the age of 144. Though he was not necessarily convinced of the greatness of the Great King, or Yahvo for that matter, Gan was far from the despot his father was.

Unfortunately, he was never quite given the chance to do much for his people, as the "sins" of his grandmother consumed his reign in the throne.

Six months after Gan's coronation, the first signs of the plague¹ began to show themselves. Eventually, the Healers would discover that the plague was an evolved version of the disease that Ahlsendar had created to destroy the Pento. The evolved version cut D'ni life spans in half and caused massive infertility. For the elderly and the young, death usually came quickly in the form of heart failure.

The appearance of the plague, and the eventual announcement that it was similar to what the Great King had created, caused the public to cast most of their blame for the illness on the Great King. Very few people knew of Jolatha's request to open the tomb. Those who knew of the breaking of the seal seemed to have not spoken

of it, or possibly were not heard if they did. Numerous records indicate that as far as the public was concerned, the plague was the Great King's fault.

Somewhat surprisingly (because of the infertility rates) Gan managed to have a son in 2050. He died 20 years later at the age of 199 after being in the throne for only 55 years (the shortest of any King).

Gan left his son a population that was slowly dying, both physically and emotionally, and there was no cure in sight.

1. The Plague ended up killing over a quarter of the D'ni population and cutting birth rates in half, until its cure was found in 2262.

King Behnashiren



Behnashiren took the throne in 2070 at the age of 20 (a record that was never surpassed). He was extremely young to inherit the throne, and his short reign displayed his immaturity.

It was said that there was never any control or leadership from the throne while Behnashiren sat in it. As a result, the people were forced to look elsewhere for some kind of trust or hope. Most turned to religion, leading to many more factions and cults. Many

claimed healing powers either from nature, special leaders, or Yahvo himself, through a variety of different means.

It seems clear that Behnashiren wavered in his stance on just about everything, including religion. In some speeches he begged Yahvo for healing, while in others he sought for help from the Tree. In the meantime, he was of no help to the Healers or Chemists, both of which were working hard to find a cure. In fact, some of Behnashiren's speeches point to public condemnation of the Guilds, accusing them of "shallow efforts" and "failing their own people." Those who held faith that any cure existed outside of miracles and/or special potions were few and far between.

The population continued to die and the amount of children born decreased tremendously. Behnashiren himself died in 2193 at the young age of 143 without any descendants to leave the throne to. In fact, so few children were being born that Behnashiren had trouble choosing an heir, even from his own staff.¹ As a result, he chose his 179-year-old Uncle to take the throne after his death. It was later said that some higher power must have been involved in such a choice, as Behnashiren "was far too ignorant to choose an heir that made so much sense."²

1. It was often customary to choose the child of a staff member if a King did not wish to choose (or could not) any of his own blood.
2. Taken from the writings of Grand Master Ishem of the Guild of Legislators.



King Hemelin

Hemelin took the throne in 2193 at the age of 179. Hemelin had been a Guild Master in the Guild of Healers, and it was said he took the throne "with rage in his heart and fire in his mouth."¹ He was extremely angered over public opinion of his Guild and made it his mission to make sure that a cure was found. Some say he exhibited more power

and authority in the throne in one week than his nephew had in 123 years.

Hemelin was fairly convinced that a cure lay in the Books of Old and he had been encouraging the Healers to look there long before his coronation as King. However, his nephew had been hesitant to allow access to the Books, something that immediately changed once Hemelin had authority to look through them.

Hemelin seemed to be a fairly devout follower of Yahvo and often claimed that only Yahvo would heal them, not the "other gods" that his people were seeking. In 2255, Hemelin became extremely ill and most thought was about to die. The Guild of Healers continued to try and prevent death, but the prognosis was very grave.

It was during his days in the sick bed that he met a woman named Lalen. She helped to care for him and, as time passed, Hemelin found himself "... living just to see her one more time," as he wrote later. Lalen must have felt the same way. The new love seemed to forge a new will to live. Hemelin recovered and, to the day he died, praised Lalen for the reason he was able to defeat the plague.²

Two years later, Lalen helped the rest of D'ni defeat the plague. Rumors say that while searching through the old histories that her relationship afforded her access to, she found hints as to where more of the Old Books had been kept. It was a few months later that the *Book of Birenni*, a particular Book that Hemelin had always sought, was found. Six years after the discovery, the Guild of Healers, led by Guild Master Jaysem, considered the plague cured.³ Records point to "tremendous celebration ... like had never been seen before...."⁴ A newfound optimism spread throughout the culture and, unofficially, the D'ni Renaissance began. It should also be noted that on this day in 2262, King Hemelin and Lalen wed in a grand ceremony.⁵

In 2270, the first post-plague child was born and Hemelin promised to give him the throne as a symbolic gesture "... of hope and celebration."

Though Hemelin tried to use the end of the plague as a tool to encourage his people back to Yahvo, it did not seem to succeed. Instead there seemed to be a newfound love of the culture itself:

of the arts, of technology, and of further exploration into the "truths" of the universe.

In 2350, the Minor Guild of Miners, following the encouragement of Hemelin, announced their plans for drastic improvement in mining methods and technologies.

Hemelin left an upbeat, but "rather dazed"⁶ culture to his successor when he passed away at the age of 342 in 2356.

1. From *The Healing of D'ni*, written by Manesah in 2294.
2. Though others did live through the illness, Healer records indicate a 95 percent fatality rate once the disease reached its later stages.
3. A drink was developed that prevented the body from contracting the illness even when directly exposed.
4. From *The Healing of D'ni*, written by Manesah in 2294.
5. As a result, the day became a day often chosen for marriage in later years.
6. Taken from the journal of King Hemelin, written directly before his death in 2356.



King Hinash

Hinash took the throne in 2533 at the age of 66.

Hinash's first major accomplishment was the ordering of the construction of the new Guild of Miners facility. The construction, begun in 2577 and finished in 2580, marked the first use of extrusion in construction and work, a much faster and more efficient means of building.

Hinash had been a member of the Guild of Stone Masons before his coronation. As such, records point to him being extremely interested in the mining and construction technologies that were being pursued. As well, Hinash was one of the strongest proponents for expansion within the cave system.

Though Hinash's push for expansion was not met with much enthusiasm at the time, it set the foundation for great expansion that would occur under the reign of his son Needrah, with the sculptor Lahkeer leading the charge.

Hinash was apparently also very interested in pursuing better relationships with other cultures, often pushing for further interaction and increased trade. He not only opened up the rules on trade,¹ but also pushed the cultural "rules" concerning relationships with those of non-D'ni blood.² In 2709, five years after the death of his first wife who died giving birth to his fourth son, Hinash married a woman of non-D'ni blood.

The fact that the marriage was met with little opposition was a sign in itself of the relaxing attitude of the people toward the "outsiders."

The affect of such actions upon the culture was grand. Foreign materials were used much more in construction, as well as clothing and jewelry, and foreign music and art influence began to show itself in the D'ni art of the day.

It was apparently with some thankfulness that Hinash's second wife did not bear him a son. Though the culture had relaxed, it is rather clear that the public did not want to even have to deal with the possibility of non-D'ni blood in the throne. In fact, one author went so far as to say "... even had they bore a child, it would have made for a very uneasy public ... to have such a being living with the palace ... perhaps taking the public's acceptance too far."³

Hinash died in 2779 at the age of 312, leaving his fourth son to rule.

1. There had been strict regulations up to that point concerning imported goods and travel between Ages.
2. Up to that point, no one, most of all a King, dared to marry an outsider.
3. From *How They Came: A Detailed Look at What Started the Mee-Dis War*, by Jamen. Written in 7201.



King Needrah

Needrah took the throne in 2779 at the age of 75.

Needrah had been a member of the Minor Guild of Sculptors at the same time as the great sculptor Lahkeer, and as a result the two were excellent friends. As Needrah took the throne, Lahkeer, who was four years younger, was starting to be recognized. Those who had seen his work were already

claiming him as one of the greatest artists D'ni had ever seen,¹ even though most had never heard his name.

Needrah had always been a proud supporter of cave expansion and once he gained the throne, made it his mission to make sure that his people felt the same way.

Needrah's three older brothers were very close to him, and in fact, took the role of his closest advisors. Each was a Guild Master, the oldest with the Guild of Miners, the second with the Guild of Stone Masons, and the third with the Minor Guild of Architects. Because of their positions, each ended up having a great effect on the accomplishments of Needrah.

Most of the evidence supports the fact that it was not Needrah's persuasive speeches or motivational abilities alone that pushed the expansions, but also the fantastic skill and talent of Lahkeer. He only needed one chance to prove his skill to the public, and Needrah gave him that opportunity in 2807 with the design for a monument to the discovery of the *Book of Birenni*. After that, Lahkeer along

with Needrah and his brother presented a plan for a new residential district. From that point forward, it seems as though expansion could not have been stopped even if someone had tried.

Throughout the 221 years of Needrah's reign, four new districts were begun, including the residential Jaren, the elite of the elite districts Kaleh, the business district of Kali, and the industrial district (managing importation and manufacturing of foreign goods) Nehweril District.

In 2916, the Guild of Mechanists announced industrial extrusion, allowing for further improvements in construction methods, including "unistructural"² buildings.

Needrah passed away in the year 3000 at the age of 296. He had two daughters, but no sons of his own to give the throne. Instead he chose the oldest son of his brother to succeed.

1. From *The Man from J'Taeri*, by Kimal. Written in 3243.
2. Instead of the joining of blocks that had been used up to that point, unistructural construction allowed for the "weaving of different stone, almost like a sweater," as one historian described it, making it appear as a single seamless piece of stone.



King Rakeri

Rakeri took the throne in 3000 at the age of 81. In the same year of Rakeri's coronation ceremony, a man by the name of Tevahr was born. Beginning in 3077, many say he defined Rakeri's reign more than Rakeri himself.¹

Tevahr was an ardent follower of the Great King and spent his entire growing up studying the King's teachings and words. By the time he was 65, he was

apparently appalled at the state of his people, especially pertaining to religious matters. Though he began on a small scale, in a matter of years, Tevahr became one of the most influential men in D'ni history.

He was a powerful leader, a gifted speaker, and a tremendous motivator, and by 3077, a well-known name. It was in 3077 that Tevahr publicly denounced the sects and his people's (including the government's) lack of faith in the principles and laws of Yahvo that they were founded upon. He often pointed to the Council Chamber (and other government structures) that now covered the Tomb of the Great King as a symbol of what the hearts and souls of D'ni had become. "There is no longer time for religion, as government and power have stolen our love," he stated numerous times. Most of the public seemed to agree with Tevahr, especially concerning the Tomb of the Great King and its covering; they believed they should never have allowed it to happen.

Although not remembered as a great event in itself, most historians agreed that credit should be given to Rakeri's reaction to the teachings of Tevahr. Rakeri, at first, was infuriated at

Tevahr's speeches and his apparent disapproval of the culture. In return, he denounced Tevahr and his teachings, and even threatened to have him imprisoned.

In 3081, Rakeri supposedly attended one of Tevahr's speeches in an effort to ridicule it and give the other side to the public. Instead, he ended up in a public debate with Tevahr. According to witnesses, it was a debate that Tevahr clearly won.² Though Tevahr handled the debate with the King as best he could, at times his words were rather harsh; words to which the King had no response, and ended up bringing quite a bit of ridicule upon the King instead of Tevahr. However, instead of ordering Tevahr's death, which he probably could have done, he returned to his palace and thought about what he had heard.³

Five days later, Rakeri personally invited Tevahr to the palace and later that same day announced that he had chosen Tevahr as his main prophet⁴ and asked forgiveness from his people for the wrongs, not only of himself, but of the Kings before him. Those who personally witnessed the speech of King Rakeri left the event transformed.⁵ It was not long until their personal transformations began to change the entire culture.

By 3100, six hundred years after government records showed 2500 registered sects, there were forty-seven sects in existence. Only ten of those sects' memberships was greater than five hundred. The public seemed to return again to the beliefs their culture had been founded upon, those that Ri'neref had taught and the Great King had expanded upon.

The people were again unified and much work was done to join the classes of rich and poor that, by that time, had already begun to separate. There was major renovation of deteriorating districts (mostly poor) and construction of a new Theatre Company and Concert Hall in the Belari District, what had been one of the poorer districts in the entire city.

In 3112, Rakeri announced, with Tevahr by his side, plans for grand renovations (an almost complete reconstruction) of the Great Temple. Rakeri also announced that the old line of the Great Zero was accurate and should be honored again.

The Temple itself was to take advantage of handheld extruder technology that had been developed in 3092. As well the great artist Fahlee⁶ was to paint the inside of the Temple. As it turned out, it was Fahlee's final masterpiece, as he passed away in 3123, six months after the completion of the Temple.

For the remaining years of Rakeri's reign, expansion continued both outside and inside the cavern. New mining technology was seemingly announced annually, bringing with it great prestige to the relatively newly formed Major Guild of Miners.

Tevahr passed away at the young age of 218 in 3218. Rakeri was so greatly disturbed at his passing that he ordered five days of national sadness. There were minor protests from a few of the still remaining sects (who obviously did not follow the order) but for the most part, D'ni mourned with Rakeri over the loss of the prophet.

Rakeri died a year after Tevahr at the age of 300, leaving the throne to his first-born son, Tejara.

1. From *Yahvo's Voice*, written by Adesh in 3143.
2. Many witnesses' testimonies of the event are chronicled in *Yahvo's Voice*.
3. According to the Prophetess Shama, Rakeri was greatly affected by the words. He refused to speak to anyone for two days following the debate.
4. Though women usually took the roles of prophets, the choice of Tevahr was one that no one argued. Shama herself was said to be thrilled that Tevahr's wisdom was being sought.
5. From *Yahvo's Voice*, written by Adesh in 3143.
6. Considered by most to be the greatest artist of the D'ni Renaissance.



King Tejara

Tejara took the throne in 3219 at the age of 114. Though his father was considered to be an extremely decent and honorable man (especially in his later years), Tejara did not follow in those footsteps.

It's said that he was an intelligent man but that he used that intelligence and cleverness for his own personal gain throughout his life.¹ In fact, rumors say that Tejara succeeded rather well

at convincing his own father that he was the perfect choice for the throne when most believed that one of his two younger brothers would have done much more for his people than he ever did.

If there was one thing that seemed to direct Tejara's reign, it was personal gain. He was known as a masterful pretender long after his death, while those who saw through his lies during his reign were few and far between.²

Due to Tejara's nature, there is not much good that can be said about his time in the throne. The palace underwent a major renovation in 3271, and in 3279 the Writer's Guild presented Tejara with the King's Age, one of the most beautiful and amazing Ages that had been written up to that point.³ It was later discovered that Tejara had ordered the Age written by two Writers who eventually "died" of mysterious illnesses after their work was done.

Tejara was married officially to one woman, although there were many rumors of multiple other "companions." As it turned out, Tejara was also known within his inner circle to be an extremely jealous man, especially of his wife and the other women in his life.

In 3285, Tejara's oldest brother was imprisoned for the creation of illicit Ages, a crime he vehemently denied to the time of his imprisonment. Tejara expressed great sorrow at the sentencing, although it was later learned (well after Tejara's death) that the crime had been set up as punishment for what Tejara had perceived as lustful looks from his brother.

In 3298, a Guild Master of the Guild of Miners was killed in a freak accident while inspecting the progress of new tunnels. Again it was later learned that Tejara had ordered the man killed due to a relationship he had had many years earlier with one of Tejara's lovers, long before Tejara had met her.

Though Tejara's reign was viewed as fairly repulsive by most, it is important to note that for the first time in their history, the people of D'ni remained strong and focused, even under the leadership of a poor King. The words and teachings of Tevahr stayed in their hearts and they focused on their personal lives (and if they were pleasing to Yahvo) more than their King.⁴

If there is anything good to be said of Tejara, it is that he did not destroy the fragile condition of his people. Religion was not important to him and thus, though he never did anything to encourage his people one way or another, he did nothing to prevent those who wished to believe a certain way from doing so.

Tejara died in 3422 at the age of 317 and left the throne to his "third" son. Though Tejara claimed that the boy was born of his wife, there were quite a few rumors that the boy was actually the first son of one of Tejara's younger maidens. The rumor was never proved either way, as both his wife and the maiden passed away two years after the boy was born. Though officially Tejara had three sons, it's possible that he actually fathered twelve sons and seven daughters, an exorbitant number for a D'ni.⁵

1. Excerpted from Grand Master Jaron's (of the Guild of Writers) private journal.
2. From *The Lost Son*, written by the prophetess Hailesi in 3422.
3. Grand Master Jaron's private journal.
4. From *The Lasting Impact*, written by the grandson of Tevahr, Ailem, in 3576.
5. It should be noted that most of these facts were not public information until long after Tejara's death. For the most part, the D'ni honestly believed that Tejara had been a decent king. Though some began to judge the reign of Tejara by his son, it was not until much later, when truths were revealed, that the public's opinion of Tejara truly changed.



King Ti'amel

Ti'amel took the throne in 3422 at the young age of 39. Like his father, Ti'amel's major concern was personal pleasure. Unlike his father, he seemed to be not nearly as clever at hiding his true intentions from his people.

In spite of Ti'amel's inability to lead, a few worthwhile historic events were carried out during his reign.

First was the construction of Stone Eater in 3469. Though Ti'amel really had nothing to do with the Guild of Miners' first colossal tunneling machine, he claimed quite a bit of the credit at its christening. Grand Master Namen, of the Guild of Miners, who did spearhead the effort, was irate at the lack of mention of his own name during the speech and made his thoughts public in the days that followed.

Like his father, Ti'amel carried out relations with quite a few different women besides his wife, Shama, whom he married in 3477. Unlike his father, it was said of Ti'amel that these women, including his wife, much more easily persuaded him.

Public opinion clearly believed that Shama was a rather incredible woman. Why she stayed with him through his entire life, even through his well-publicized "affairs," was not as clear. Some said she used Ti'amel and the marriage for her benefit, as she definitely had his ear.¹ Others said it was because she was a faithful follower of Yahvo and believed that the promise she had made to him was not meant to be broken.²

Regardless, it seems clear that Shama was an intelligent woman who, though it was never stated publicly, for all practical purposes held the throne from 3477 on.

In 3500, women became eligible for Minor Guild education. Though there had been women participation in the Minor Guilds before that point (actresses, etc.), they had never been officially recognized as members of those guilds.

Though there was a push to allow women to join the Major Guilds as well as the Minor, Shama herself gave a strong case not to allow such an event to happen in 3523.³ She strongly disagreed with women being in governmental positions, a seemingly ironic view as she was basically "King" of D'ni at the time of her speech. Regardless, she argued that women had much more important duties, including the guiding of children. The push for such allowances seemed to fade away in the years following her speech.

In 3574, Shama gave birth to Ti'amel's first son (at least that the public knew of). For the remaining years of Ti'amel's reign, Shama focused on the raising of her son, whom she vowed would not be the same kind of man as his father. A daughter was born thirty years later, and Shama raised her with equal resolve.

Again, though the people were not led well, they remained strong in their beliefs and purposes, somewhat ignoring the bad leadership of Ti'amel and instead focusing on the high example of his wife.⁴

Ti'amel passed away from an unknown disease in 3654 at the age of 271, giving the throne to his first-born son.

1. Written by the prophetess Athsheba in private journals.
2. From *Shama*, written by Lalen in 3890.
3. Shama's words were spoken to the Council as they debated whether or not to allow women into the Major Guilds.
4. From *The Lasting Impact*, written by the grandson of Tevahr, Ailem, in 3576.



King Kedri

Kedri took the throne in 3654 at the age of 80. Kedri was seen by many as a testament to the type of woman his mother had been. The day of Kedri's coronation was the proudest moment of Shama's life, she often said, up until the day she passed away in 3689.

Whether or not they agreed with Kedri's decisions (it seems most did),

there was seemingly hardly a single D'ni who did not greatly respect and care for Kedri. He was a king for the people and, most historians agree, was the most popular king of D'ni history, besides the Great King.

Kedri led a number of small proposals that often benefited the lower classes. At the same time, it seems, he assured the higher classes that the proposals were the right thing to do.

Up to that point, The Island had basically been set aside for the elite. It was Kedri who established the district of Shamathen (later changed to Kerath'en) as a "more affordable" residential district.

Kedri also donated his own Age of the Kings, written during the reign of his grandfather, to the Common Library. He directed money to massive renovation projects throughout D'ni, including further additions to the Great Temple, the Opera House, and further renovations to Belari, the deteriorating district that Rakeri had started years earlier.

In the numerous books and journals written about Kedri, it is said that he often walked the streets of D'ni and attended events with the rest of his people as though he were one of them.

He was married in 3686 at a public ceremony that was open to all who wished to attend. As one writer said of the event, "if you did not want to be there, you did not want to be D'ni...."

Kedri eventually passed away in 3903 at the age of 329, leaving the throne to his first-born son.



King Lemashal

Lemashal took the throne in 3903 at the age of 100. Lemashal had been fairly involved in the Minor Guild of Actors, although it was said that what especially interested Lemashal was illusion. Up to that point, there had been a few different "magic clubs," although nothing official.

So, in 3961 Lemashal, with quite a bit of trouble,

forced the establishment of the Minor Guild of Illusionists. It was not a Guild that most found necessary but, Lemashal argued, that neither was the Guild of Actors, Painters, or Musicians; it was entertainment, of which illusion was a valid form.¹ Ironically, it was later discovered that the establishment of the Guild was an illusion in itself.

While the Guild was debated,² Lemashal established an undercover intelligence force to keep track on the more dangerous factions and subgroups of D'ni. They were a highly secretive group, of which the public had little or no knowledge, until years later. And so, with the confirmation of the Guild of Illusions, the Relyimah (literally translated "The Unseen") were also established.

Though the previous few Kings had been fairly focused on D'ni and expanding their own culture and territory, Lemashal again looked toward the outside cultures in a manner that had not been seen since Hinash. In 3975, he remarried (as his first wife had passed away at a young age) to an outsider. Unlike Hinash, who had also married an outsider, Lemashal and his new wife bore a son (his first) twenty years later, in 3995, and another son in 4014.

For the first time, the D'ni were truly confronted with their views on outside cultures and the arguments were said to have started as soon as Lemashal's son was born, as to whether or not he would be allowed to someday rule as King.

Unfortunately, though Lemashal led quite a few efforts to supply better lives for other cultures, along with freer trade and sharing of resources with other Ages, the remaining years of his reign were dominated by whether or not his son would be allowed to reign.

To Lemashal's credit, though he could have forced his will concerning his son upon his people, he never did. If his son were to eventually reign, he said, "It will only be over a people who want him to."

In 4030, the Council decided that a King had to be of pure D'ni blood. Lemashal signed the decision into law the following year.

When he died in 4083, he left the throne to the youngest child of his cousin, whose mother had been the younger sister of his father Kedri.

1. Taken from a speech to the Council arguing for the establishment of the Guild.
2. Lemashal did not need Council approval to establish the Guild. Though many Kings preferred Council approval, it was said later that Lemashal purposely wanted the debates to take place as a distraction.



King Ishek

Ishek took the throne in 4083 at the age of 85. His grandmother had been Shama, and of Ishek it was often said that he ran his throne almost exactly as his Uncle Kedri had.

He was another of the peoples' Kings and refused to separate himself from his people or view himself at a higher level than those he served. It seems a King with such an attitude was hard to not like and his

popularity was close to that of Kedri's.

Like Lemashal, he focused on the involvement of non-D'ni and their importance to the D'ni culture and expansion. His powerful words of equality between the D'ni and non-D'ni were truly put to the test in 4103.

Ishek and his wife had been touring a food facility run by natives on the Age of Yimas. As it turns out, the party was

ambushed and Ishek's wife was taken by a group of natives whomanaged, using D'ni Linking Books, to easily escape before Ishek or his guards could react.¹

As word leaked out of the event, the words "animals," "uncivilized," and "primitive" were used to describe those of the other worlds in a way that had not been used since the Pento War. Ishek fought the people's new perception and argued that not all outside cultures should be judged on a few radicals. His words, however, were seen as empty by much of the public as he waited for word on his wife.

Word finally came. The Yimas wanted their own Worlds to rule, as they felt the D'ni ruled them. They had specific demands for the kind of Worlds, many of which were impossible, as they had no concept of the art of Writing.² Unless they were given the three Worlds they demanded, Ishek's wife was to be executed.

Many viewed Ishek as a faithful study of history and, in particular, the Pento War. Because of his knowledge of history and his belief in the integrity of the Yimas, he was fairly convinced that it was not the Yimas who wanted the Books but some small faction of D'ni who was directing them. Rumors say that he was even fairly convinced of the particular faction that was doing it.

As was the case with the Pento War, it had not been the Pento who were to blame, but the Judges who had wrongly sought power. Given Ishek's apparent distrust of some within his own people more than those who were not D'ni, he had been a strong supporter of the Relyimah. As it turned out, it was their information that saved him.

There were a number of groups who felt as though D'ni should be completely sealed from the other cultures. One group in particular³ had been especially vocal in its opinions, especially while Ishek's wife had been held captive, using the tragedy to further their own cause. It was to this group Ishek apparently directed the Relyimah, ordering them to uncover any information they could.

Three days later, Ishek sent out word that he had no intention of giving the Yimas the Worlds they had asked for. Hours later, Relyimah informants followed two members of the faction Ishek had suspected to an Illegal Age where his wife was imprisoned.

Once the public received word that it had once again been their own people directing the operation, records indicate that they were greatly dismayed. Plans were uncovered that indicated the faction was to kill his wife no matter whether the Ages were given or not, only to prove further that outsiders could not be trusted. In fact, it seems as though the public was quickly learning that it was their own blood who could not be trusted. As Ri'neref and the Great King had often said, it was a great power they had been entrusted with and "... it is our own hearts that must be watched ... a temptation too great to be resisted without strict rules or willing hearts...."⁴

As a result, there was a great push for more strict guidelines for interaction with other Ages, as well as rules for the Ages themselves. "They sought the rules not because the other cultures were savages, but because our own culture could not be trusted to deal with them honorably."⁵

Ishek passed away in 4291 at the age of 293, leaving the debates to his first-born son.

1. Taken from City Guard records.
2. Taken from transcripts of Grand Master Jaken's (of the Guild of Writers) speech to Ishek.
3. Depending on sources, two different groups are credited with the kidnapping, although Relyimah records indicate that it was a group known as Blood of Yahvo. Other records indicate it was a group known as Light of D'ni.
4. Taken from *Book One of the Great King*.
5. From *How They Came: A Detailed Look at What Started the Mee-Dis War*, by Jamen. Written in 7201.

King Loshemanesh



Loshemanesh took the throne in 4291 at the age of 123. Though Loshemanesh's reign was relatively short, it is believed he made the most of the years he was given.

Loshemanesh had seen first-hand the effects of too much interaction with other cultures and because of that held firmly to his views, disagreeing with what was becoming the majority view in D'ni. He often pointed out, as his father also had, that before the Pento War, strict regulations

had existed on interaction with other cultures and it did nothing to stop the Judges from their writings. Loshemanesh himself stated, "Those who wish to take advantage of outside Ages and peoples can not be stopped ... must first be listened to within D'ni ... not forced to take such extreme measures.... When extreme measures are taken ... the consequences must be increased."¹

In 4305, law was passed stating that creation or trading of illicit Ages was punishable by permanent imprisonment on solitary Prison Ages—a fate that some said was worse than death. In 4307, Loshemanesh passed (barely) another law stating that any D'ni who coerced an outsider to commit a crime (no matter what the crime) was also punishable by permanent imprisonment.

While the laws were passed, Loshemanesh encouraged further interaction with the other cultures while continuing to argue interaction itself was not the problem. However, it seems as though many failed to see his stance and still pushed for stricter measures on the Guild of Writers and a complete sealing off of any interaction with outsiders.

In 4334, the Age of Trases (a major mining Age) was halfway destroyed because of the mistake of a native running D'ni machines that had been established there. Families were forced to evacuate and, in one particularly odd case, supposedly a child was born while the mother had been linking from Trases back to D'ni. Regardless, the destruction of the Age was another cause of argument for those who wished to seal themselves off and a case that Loshemanesh argued could have happened regardless of who was running the machine.

Sadly, in 4438 Loshemanesh was assassinated by the same faction who had kidnapped his mother years earlier, making his life an example of what he had often preached: It was the D'ni who had to change. If they did not, he had argued, problems would always exist, whether or not outsiders were involved.

He left the throne to the first son of his younger brother, as he had no children of his own.

1. Taken from a public speech explaining his signing of the laws.



King Ji

Ji took the throne in 4438 at the very young age of 36. The combination of an apparently immature and weak King, along with the tension that was growing within D'ni over the outsiders and religious principles, went down in history as a bad one.

At the start of his reign, government records say Ji was overtaken with his new palace life and the luxuries it afforded him. "He seemed

much more concerned with what kind of food he would be served for breakfast than whether or not D'ni should pull back all of its people who were living in outside Ages, as some were suggesting," wrote one anonymous author.

Because of his apparent lack of concern over the real issues, it was the Grand Masters who quickly became the most frustrated with Ji. It was said by a few Grand Masters, in private journals, that Ji would whole-heartedly agree with them, while they presented their strategies and plans, and then agree with their challengers an hour later.

The indecision by Ji made for little evidence of progress and complete frustration for most of D'ni. For the first time in many years, the signs of division began to appear as they had during the 2500s. The once unified religious beliefs showed signs of splitting, the once unified classes began to separate into rich and poor, and the once confident "Rulers of Worlds" began to wonder whether they could rule even themselves.

Adding to the confusion were the words of the Watcher. The Watcher, as he had come to be called, was the child who had been born between Ages, and who now, rumors said, had the ability to see beyond time, past, present, and future.

In 4500, he wrote *Words*, a 625-line volume describing his visions of D'ni. Much of the book dealt with a great destruction of D'ni that would one day occur, and the signs that would come with that destruction. Many claimed that the book was seizing upon the chaos of the day and dismissed it as rubbish, while others seemed to be rather intrigued.

Also in 4500, Guild Master Kinef of the Guild of Legislators brought forth a proposal that would allow the use of private education separate from the Guilds. Although many seemed frightened of the idea, as education and the Guilds had always been thought of as inseparable,¹ the proposal eventually passed by a slim margin.² Ji seemingly had little to say on the proposal one way or the other.

Ji was married in 4502 to Milane, a woman who had been married three previous times. It was Ji's first, and the prophetess advising him had strongly spoken against it. The marriage lasted twenty-five years before ending, and marked the first time any King had divorced one of his wives.

Ji remarried in 4565 to a woman 100 years younger, something culturally accepted. It was the rumors that she was the daughter of the Watcher that created problems. She denied the claim but did show quite a bit of interest in the Watcher's writings and convinced Ji to do the same.

The marriage lasted until 4645 when Ji's wife vanished. Some said outsiders had taken her³ (since nothing had been resolved concerning them), others said Ji had murdered her,⁴ and others said she had returned to her father, the Watcher (even though the Watcher died in 4606).⁵

Ji's final wife was one of his own prophetesses he had sought for advice, marking another first for a King. The two were married until Ji's death in 4692. He left the throne to the third son of a close friend. He was 290 years old.

To sum up Ji's reign, one author wrote, "There was a collective sigh of relief throughout the cavern on that day he finally left us."⁶

1. As spoken by Kinef during debates to the Council in 4500.
2. It seems private education never really received near the admiration and respect from the public and thus never truly succeeded.
3. Common among those still wanting more strict guidelines pertaining to outside involvement.
4. One of Ji's gardeners claimed he witnessed the murder with his own eyes.
5. Though the Watcher was believed to have died in 4606, there were numerous rumors of people claiming to have seen him and talked to him.
6. Taken from a recently discovered manuscript that was apparently never published.



King Yableshan

Yableshan took the throne in 4843 at the age of 109. Though most commentaries say that he held to the same beliefs as his father, it seems he was not nearly as strong and thus did not carry the level of respect that his father had—a character trait that some of the more violent factions preyed upon.

Demath had managed to refocus the D'ni to a

large part. However, the few factions who still desired to make their case were able to make Yableschan's reign an unpleasant one.

In 4865, the Blood of Yahvo kidnapped Yableschan's first son from the Guild of Chemists. In a letter, the faction stated they would kill the King's son if one of their own leaders was not released.¹ Yableschan ordered the Relyimah to find his son, but they were apparently unable to do so (later it was discovered that a key member of the Relyimah had joined the Blood of Yahvo and was aiding them).

Feeling forced, Yableschan gave in to the demands and released the prisoner they had asked for. The body of his son appeared on the steps of the palace a few days later.

The death of Yableschan's son, along with newfound evidences of a mole within the Relyimah, further separated D'ni into two sides. Those who wished to end outside intervention were becoming stronger, publicly raising their cause, almost daily. Those who followed the majority were growing angrier and less tolerable of those who did not. As a result, there is little doubt that there were very few D'ni left who fell into the middle ground. There were even less, including Yableschan, who could bridge the two sides.²

Yableschan, in an apparent attempt to divert his people's attention from the brewing wars, decided in 4889 to announce remodels for all of the 18 Major Guilds. It was the first of its kind since the D'ni had been founded, and was warmly embraced by the Guilds. Under the announcement, Yableschan changed some of the original restrictions of Ri'nerf, offering the Guilds more liberty in the structures they could build.

In 4901, Yableschan stated his plans for a new Common Library, located directly within the Vamen District of D'ni (a middle-class district). In 4910, he announced plans for a new park to be built on Neref Island. In 4914, three new "Recreation" Ages were placed within the park as gifts from the Guild of Writers in order to celebrate the completion of their new Guild.

The diversions seemed to do their job until 4954 when an explosion occurred on the Age of Meanas,³ killing 400 outsiders and 78 D'ni. It was apparently the result of a bad combination of gasses: one the D'ni had brought with them and the other already in existence on Meanas. Another push was begun to seal themselves from outside influence.

The Relyimah (who were usually counted on in these situations) apparently had no information as to the facts of the explosion. They were still apparently in the midst of their own chaos, trying to discover the mole. There were some who thought the explosion had been a set-up, but it could not be proven.⁴

In 5043, Yableschan placed a man by the name of Faresh in charge of the Guild of Illusionists. His first mission, as ordered by Yableschan himself, was to find whoever was destroying the Relyimah's ability to gain knowledge.

Though most believe that Faresh had been more interested in actual illusions than the Unseen, he was also known as an extremely intelligent man and immediately put into action a plan to clean up the Relyimah. He also began construction of a "house" on one of the private islands of the cavern that blatantly demonstrated his love for illusions.

Yableschan died in 5081 at the age of 347. He never had any other children after his son was killed and left the throne to his youngest brother-in-law (his younger sister's husband).

1. Goshen had been imprisoned in a prison Book 50 years earlier by Demath.
2. From *How They Came: A Detailed Look at What Started the Mee-Dis War*, by Jamén. Written in 7201.
3. Meanas was well known for its production of mining machinery.
4. From *Revealing the Unseen*, written by Besharen in 5999.



King Emen

Emen took the throne in 5081 at the age of 150. Two years after his coronation, two members of the Relyimah mysteriously disappeared and were never seen again.¹ Faresh became a silent hero in the key members of the government and the factions were again quieted, knowing they were being watched.

Key members of the government were often seen at parties taking place in Faresh's mansion, and rumors of "puzzle rooms" and "secret halls" grew throughout the city. The house itself, located on Katha island, was becoming one of the more talked-about buildings in the entire cavern.²

In 5093, two members of a cult known as One D'ni were proven guilty for the explosion that had occurred years earlier on Meanas. Both were permanently imprisoned.

At the same time, Emen (along with the Guild of Caterers) announced the completion of two new food Ages, one of which was run solely by outsiders, and produced new food sources³ that had never been tasted in D'ni before.

The popularity of Faresh's mansion caused others (mainly elite) to request permission to build on the many islands that surrounded the city proper. In 5095, Emen decided to sell many of the islands that, up to that point, had been government property. Records indicate the sale of over twenty-three of the islands in one year to private citizens who could afford their heavy price tag.

In 5102, disaster hit the family of Faresh in the mysterious death of his daughter. Official City Guard records said she awoke in the middle of the night, claiming to see spirits, and jumped from her bedroom window to her death.

Rumors abounded as to the true cause. Some thought the house was haunted, while others (mainly government) thought she might have been a target of factions.⁴

Perhaps the most damaging rumors dealt with the Watcher. In *Words* he had described similar events taking place,⁵ and such a public event caused many to begin to study his words again. It was the beginning of philosophical chaos yet again.

Faresh left the house a year after the death of his daughter, claiming to be unable to live with the memories of his daughter. The house was given completely (although no one knew it at the time) to the Relyimah. Rumors of dark shadows in windows and boats silently rowing toward the island fueled the idea the house was haunted.

It appears that after the Relyimah controlled the house, Emen himself often made visits, recommending a number of renovations (tunnels, etc.) that he thought would aid them in their cause.

In 5202, a public ferry system was approved by Emen, offering much more frequent access between The Island, the city proper, and the surrounding smaller islands. One of those islands Emen gave to the Minor Guild of Artists, Musicians, and Actors, who turned it into a Cultural Center. In later years the center often hosted outside concerts, plays, etc. on the water.

Four years before Emen's death, the Guild of Stone Masons announced "Deretheni."⁶ The substance had been produced in a laboratory for the first time and was the start of much improved construction techniques.

Emen died in 5240 at the age of 309, leaving the throne to his first-born son.

1. This was not public information in around 6000. However, the discovery of the moles was well known in the highest circles of government.
2. From *Haunted by Her Cries*.
3. Shimas and Hereas became known for a large variety of fruits and vegetables that naturally grew on each.
4. From *Haunted by Her Cries*, written by Haghen in 5120.
5. *Words* has numerous references to "dreams" and "mourning in the streets," which many interpreted to describe the death of Faresh's daughter.
6. Deretheni was a lightweight stone, which proved to be extremely strong.



King Adesh

Adesh took the throne in 5549 at the age of 49.

Though Adesh was young, it was also said he was mature for his age and took quite a bit of advice from the prophetess Trisari (who had also served his Uncle). Adesh was apparently a religious man but not an especially accepting man.

The prophet Gish arrived on the scene in 5574 and began preaching, similar to what Tavahr had done years

earlier. Unlike Tavahr, Gish praised the words of Yahvo, but nothing else. The Great King, he said, was a farce, as was Tavahr. He denounced his people for claiming that *taygahn*¹ was more important than following Yahvo's commands. He declared that Tavahr and the Great King had used *taygahn* as an excuse to do what they wanted and it was time to focus on Yahvo's commands again. One of these, he added, was no interaction with the outsiders.²

Though Gish was not the first to say such things, for some reason, the public came in droves to listen to him, making him an extremely popular figure.³

Adesh denounced Gish's words at every level and arrested him numerous times. And, by such actions, only encouraged Gish, arguably making his impact upon the society even larger than what it otherwise would have been.

Gish continued his preaching until, in an apparent fit of rage, Adesh ordered⁴ the Relyimah to kill him. It was said later the decision was most likely the worst of his reign.⁵ The Relyimah succeeded in their mission in 5675. There was extreme outrage at the King, as well as the official church.

Exactly as Gish had taught, Adesh had justified killing a man (strictly against the laws of Yahvo) because he felt there was something more important that was justified because of *taygahn*. Gish became a martyr and those who followed him increased.

Adesh made attempts to draw his people back, but it was too late. There were apparently very few people (even ardent followers of the Great King) who could agree with his decision.

In fact, it was rumored that it was one of Adesh's close advisors who killed him in 5701 at the young age of 201. The throne was left to his first-born son Lanaren.

1. The word literally means to "love with the mind," implying having a close, personal knowledge of the other person, or in a certain case, Yahvo. It had been taught that in order to gain access into the Perfect Age, Yahvo only required such a relationship and nothing else.
2. From *Yahvo Alone*, written by Gish.
3. Taken from the private journals of Trisari.
4. Many think it was in fact Trisari who convinced Adesh to make the order.
5. From *The Followers*, written by Manesh.



King Lanaren

Lanaren took the throne in 5701 at the age of 98. Lanaren had not been close to his father and, as a result, was not much like him. It was rumored that it was because of Lanaren that Adesh's own advisor had killed Adesh; he knew Lanaren would give the people what they wanted.

Lanaren immediately denounced the actions of his father in killing Gish and informed the public of the existence of the Relyimah and their involvement in the death of Gish, and promised to rid them from all government activities. The announcement was a shock to the public and a huge blow to those who had served the Relyimah. Most ended up living in hidden Private Ages, while a few were murdered after their years of service to the government.¹

The loss of the Relyimah again gave the factions hope that they would be able to carry out their "demonstrations" again. However, Lanaren also promised to rid outsider involvement, meaning the factions had no need for such acts. It's believed that the promise was not one that Lanaren necessarily meant to keep, but instead one he intended to pretend he was trying to meet to keep the factions happy.

He also believed whole-heartedly in the plan to build a tunnel to The Island and was able to push it through in 5714, as Me'emmen had not been able to. While Stone Tooth was busy digging, Lanaren promised that its next task would be to continue expansion by the Ashem'en District with eventual plans to create new residential and cultural districts.

Lanaren also ordered the Major Guilds to begin work on replacing all Ages that required outsider involvement. He demanded Ages that would carry out the same tasks but without outside involvement. Most Guild Masters knew the plan would take years and years, and though they did not agree with it, agreed to attempt it.²

In 5721, new techniques were developed to incorporate structural reinforcement in extrusion-based construction, some that would aid construction of the districts Lanaren had promised.

In 5734, the tunnel connecting The Island with the city proper was canceled. Stone Tooth had been working on it for over twenty years, but the Guild Masters who were already required by Lanaren to replace a huge number of Ages were not about to connect their homes on The Island with the city proper.³ Lanaren agreed, as there were further concerns that such construction could affect the lake level or even the algae within the lake.⁴

Instead Stone Tooth was ordered to begin clearing out more space next to the Ashem'en District.

In 5856, construction was begun on the new Lanaren District. Stone Tooth was ordered to begin further exploration of the cavern by way of new tunnels.

In 5902, the Guilds announced four new Ages⁵ to replace some of those being used by outsiders. The announcement meant little, except to have the factions believe that eventually outside involvement would be finished.

5903 marked the first inhabitants of the Lanaren District, mostly manual laborers who worked in the adjoining Ashem'en.

The Relyimah were officially finished with their work in 5986. The announcement was fairly quiet, as most of their work had ceased long before that.

In 5999, Lanaren passed away at very old age of 396. He left the throne to his fifth, and youngest, son.



King Jaron

Jaron took the throne in 6284 at the age of 83.

He was apparently much like his father, more interested in keeping everyone happy than declaring one side of the debates concerning philosophy, advancement, or outside involvement right or wrong.

As a result, though the people were satisfied, there was further division among them. The elite and poor became more divided and

though there was quite a bit of new construction and renovation in both the elite and poor districts, there was nothing done to join the two.

For some reason, Jaron was obsessed with expansion and exploration of the cavern. There were rumors his obsession stemmed from Watcher prophecies. One in particular stated, "because of tunnels D'ni has changed forever." Jaron never said what drove him, but throughout his reign he pushed the Guild of Miners, Mechanists, Engineers, and Surveyors to work together to create new drills and machinery. He had great plans to widen the Rudenna Passage, which when opened would allow for further expansion.

In 6430, the announcement came. Rock Biter and the Burrower were both christened in a great ceremony and then immediately put to work. Stone Tooth and Stone Eater were used for further city expansion.

The once violent factions that had existed were, for the most part, dissolving. Many of their members were seemingly beginning to call themselves Followers of Yahvo (as Gish had been), and though they did not support outside involvement, they believed it was best to obey Yahvo and hope for a peaceful solution. Though Jaron carried out a few meetings with the factions, the dissolution of the factions had little to do with his policies or leadership. Regardless, he was able to focus on mining efforts without consequences. It was a luxury the previous Kings had not been afforded and the main reason some of the greatest expansion in D'ni history began under Jaron.

Jaron himself died in 6498 at the age of 297. Though he did see the completion of the expansion of the Rudenna Passage, he never saw the new areas to which the passage led. He left the throne to his third son.

1. From *Revealing the Unseen*, written by Besharen in 5999.

2. From the private journals of Grand Master Keman of the Guild of Legislators.

3. From *The Lost Tunnel*, written by Lashem in 6034.

4. The environmental damage claimed by Lanaren, and D'ni environmentalists was never proven. Most agree it was an easy way out for Lanaren, who then did not have to admit he was bullied by the Grand Masters who lived on The Island.

5. Three of the Ages were Food Ages, while the fourth was meant to replace one of the major Manufacturing Ages. In reality, none of them were ever used to the extent the Ages they were replacing had been used.



King Rikooth

Rikooth took the throne in 6498 at the age of 56. Though young, he had two older brothers and a sister, with whom, it was said, he often consulted. They each understood the logic of giving the throne to the youngest son (it guaranteed more time in the throne for the individual) and worked well with their

younger brother, as no other family had done previously.¹

Rikooth's first major decision came in 6510 when a new cavern was found by expeditions led by Rock Biter and the Burrower. There were calls to expand the city, but Rikooth was apparently unconvinced it was a smart plan. His older brother, who happened to be Guild Master of the Guild of Surveyors, agreed to study the cavern extensively, and Rikooth promised to make a decision upon reading results of the study.

In the meantime, Rikooth married in 6556 to a woman named Hisha. Her father was Grand Master of the Guild of Chemists and a strong believer in Gish and the fallacy of the Great King.

Though Hisha had some influence on Rikooth, he continued in the tradition of his father, never publicly stating his views on philosophy. However, she had much more influence on the three sons that they would eventually have together, including the youngest, Kerath. It was her influence that would change D'ni forever.²

In 6601, extremely detailed reports (structural analysis, water supply, rock type, etc.) came back informing Rikooth that though the newly discovered cavern was habitable, it would be very expensive to build in. Rikooth made the decision, after conferring with his advisors, that Stone Tooth, along with the new Rock Biter, should begin digging out more of the city proper (into the cave wall) for expansion, while Burrower and Stone Eater would continue to tunnel past the cavern.

In 6676, Rikooth met with leaders to discuss the involvement of outsiders. Though there had been no major incidents for hundreds of years, it was still an issue to be discussed. In the meetings it became apparent that though Rikooth understood the reasons for wishing to close down interaction with outsiders, it was a ridiculous thought. Their contribution to D'ni culture, art, construction, technology, and resources, was immeasurable. Unless there were grand reasons not to, there was no way, he argued, that he would ever force strict resolutions regarding the outsiders.³

In his older years, it appeared as though Rikooth became tired of Hisha and her views and opinions. She was expelled from the palace along with Kerath in 6700. It was well known that Kerath

was a model of his mother's thoughts, and Rikooth could hardly stand him.⁴

Though Rikooth had chosen an older brother of Kerath to be King, his thoughts were changed. As the legends told, Rikooth was on his own death bed staring out toward the Arch and he saw his son, Kerath, sailing through it. He was riding a boat in the shape of a massive lizard, standing proudly on its prow, and had come home to announce the death of his mother. As he sailed through the Arch, Rikooth apparently felt the hand of Yahvo directing him to make Kerath the next King of D'ni.

By the end of Rikooth's reign, the city was larger than ever, the classes were more divided than ever, and the religious beliefs were as divided as ever. Though there was not a large variety of beliefs, there was no clear majority of people who believed any one thing.

Rikooth passed away in 6731 at the age of 289, leaving the throne to his third son, Kerath. He left him a city that was larger than it had ever been, and fairly evenly divided in its views of the future.

1. Years later it would be a forceful argument for council ruling.

2. From *The Last King*, written by Yemas in 7002.

3. From *How They Came: A Detailed Look at What Started the Mee-Dis War*, by Jamen. Written in 7201.

4. From *The Last King*, written by Yemas in 7002.

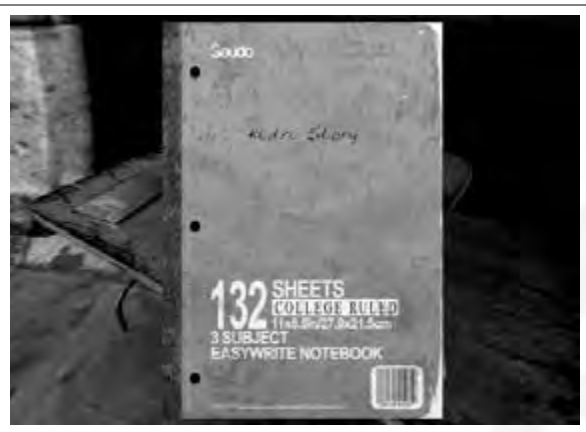
D'ni Parables



Three journals in Ae'gura library.

Three DRC journals containing ancient D'ni parables were found in the library on Ae'gura. Translated by Nick of the DRC, they provided additional insight into the life and times of those living in ancient D'ni.

Kedri Story



The Story of Kedri—taken from book 42B.

Translation: Nick

First Draft

Kedri loved his people and the people of D'ni loved their King, for Kedri did well in the eyes of Yahvo and sought to serve those whom he led.

In the 48th year of his reign, Kedri roamed the streets of Ae'gura and was greatly disturbed. For even though all people, rich and poor, loved their King, Kedri saw that the entire Island of Ae'gura was filled with those who were prosperous and those who governed D'ni.

"Where are my people?" Kedri asked to those who walked with him.

"All around you," they answered, pointing to the crowds that followed them.

"Yet I do not see my people here. I see Masters of the Guild and I see owners of our stores. But I do not see those who have no option to join our Guild or those who have built the stores. Where are my people on this island?"

So the King called together his counselors and expressed his disappointments, and he ordered that a new place (place isn't right but I'm having trouble with this word; not the usual district word either, although that might be a better translation. Or home) be built on the Island and that the name of the place (?) be Shamathen. He ordered that Shamathen be made available not to those who did possess the wealth and stature of the elite but to those who were not so fortunate. Still, they were his people. And the area was built and Kedri

was joyful to see his people live in such a place (same word again).

A short while later, after the area of Shamathen began to grow, Kedri was walking through the city, conversing with his people and telling them of his plans. And Kedri was led to the Common Library because he wanted to see the Ages that he heard his people talk of.

And again the King was disturbed and he asked his advisors, "Where are the Books that the great D'ni have written?"

"All around you," they answered, pointing to the rows of books that lined the shelves.

"Yet I do not see the Ages of our people here. I see Ages that resemble failed school assignments for the students of Writers. I see Ages that not even those students would visit, much less a King. So I will ask again, Where are the great Ages of D'ni?"

So the King returned to his palace and ordered his counselors to bring his most prized book—*The Age of the Kings*, written during the reign of his grandfather—to the Common Library so that the people of D'ni might be able to see the skills of the great writers, even as he had seen them.

And the people loved their King more than they had before.

So the King called his advisors and ordered them to add to the Great Temple, so that Yahvo might be pleased and so all of D'ni could visit their god (really it's a form of Yahvo again—I thought god made more sense though) in his house, just as those with money (an inherited kind of money) were allowed to do. The King ordered them to add to the Opera House so that all of D'ni could hear the skills of song of the people, just as those with money (an earned kind of money) were allowed to do. The King ordered them to add to the district of Belari, so that the area started by King Rakeri might not fall into disrepair but be treated as all other areas of the city and that all of D'ni might live in prosperity, just as those with money (both earned and inherited) were allowed to do.

And all people of D'ni grew to love their King more than they had before.

Some trouble spots here. Seems there were a few different kinds of money words; might need help with those as well as the whole "place" thing.

Me'emen Story



The Story of Me'emen—taken from book 21D.

Translation: Nick

First Draft

And a dark sickness spread through the city. And sores broke out on the skin of those who the sickness touched (might be better translated infected but "touched" fits with the literary style) and some began to die. The sickness came from Yasefe where the large trees grew and where the wood of Yamen was harvested. As it was, there was great fear in the houses of all those who lived with Yamen close to them. And so great fear spread through the King's household, and through all those who worked in the halls of the Guilds and those who looked over the city.

Such fear overcame the minds of reason and many began to flee the city and run to the other places that were available to them. But King Me'emen was angry at those who ran and was himself unafraid (literally not of fear).

And so he called for the Healer, Grand Master Shemef, to come to his room. And though Shemef was preparing to flee, he obeyed his King and came to him quickly.

"Grand Master Shemef," the King asked his Healer. "Have you not read the histories of our people? Have you not been instructed in the ways of those who led your Guild in the generations before you? Are you not aware of the plague that this place has already seen?"

"My King, it is for these reasons that I am prepared to flee. For I know those who died and those who were unable to prevent it from taking hold of them. I know of this plague in detail."

And the King answered. "Depart. I have no time for you, Shemef. Depart to your own Age, and do not return to this place again. May it be that my eyes never look upon your face again."

And Shemef departed from King Me'emen and he never saw him again.

And King Me'emen called for Guild Master Anem of the Guild of Healers. And though Anem was preparing to flee, he obeyed his King and came to him quickly.

"Guild Master Anem," the King asked his Healer. "Have you too not read the histories of our people? Have you not heard the ways of those who led your Guild three thousand years ago?"

"My King, of course. It is for these reasons that I know what may happen to our people. It is for that reason that we must protect ourselves first so that we may protect those who trust us for protection."

"It is not how I would have thought. Depart with your Master. And may I never see you again," King Me'emen ordered.

And King Me'emen called for Guild Master Raman of the Guild of Healers. And though Raman was preparing to flee, he obeyed his King and came to him quickly.

"Guild Master Raman," the King asked his Healer. "Tell me that you have read the histories of our people and been instructed in the ways of your Guild. Tell me you have heard of the destruction of the sickness that overcame our people three thousand years ago."

"Of course, my King. It is for these reasons that we must bring the ancient books to another Age so that we may study our records and learn in the ways that we must fight. But to stay here would be suicide."

"It is as I would have thought. Depart with your Master. And may you never see the light of the lake again," King Me'emen ordered.

And King Me'emen was greatly disturbed and troubled. And he stayed in his room for four nights. His servants brought food for him but he refused to eat. And his servants brought advisors but he refused to speak. And all of those around him became worried even as more of the city became empty.

And finally King Me'emen called for Guild Captain Irem of the Guild of Healers. And Irem was studying in the Guild and he obeyed his King and came to him quickly.

"Guild Captain Irem," the King asked his Healer. "Tell me that you have read the histories of our people and been instructed in the ways of your Guild. Tell me that not all

of D'ni is running in fear of a sickness that can be defeated."

"Of course, my King. It is for these reasons that I have not left my class since I first heard of the sickness appearing in the district where the trees appear. I understand that our father, the honored Guild Master Jaysem worked for six years even after the Book of Birenni was found. He worked day and night and stood by our people as he sought to save them from the sickness that had even infected our King. It is for these reasons that I will not leave this place until this sickness is no longer in our city."

"Tell me whatever you need and it will be yours. You are most honored in this palace today and D'ni will be saved because of you." And King Me'emen was filled with joy and he ate from the food his servants brought him and spoke with the advisors who came to speak.

As it was, Irem spent day and night without sleeping for four more days. And on the fifth day, the cure was found and the sickness was deadly no longer.

And King Me'emen gave the Guild of Healers to Irem and he was known as Grand Master from that day forward. Shemef, Anem, and Raman were restricted from the Guild of Healers and never again allowed inside of it or of the palace or of any of the King's dwellings and structures.

And King Me'emen ordered the surveying of a new section of the city to be called Nehw'eril. And this section was to be away from the city so that any sickness brought from the other worlds would not be brought to the heart of the city but instead away from it so that fear would not spread again.

And he ordered that the story of Grand Master Irem be taught to all of those who were instructed by the Guild of Healers from that day forward so that none would forget the power of D'ni and the great strength of their medicines and learning.

Seems a good place to stop. I've filled in a few words that I wasn't sure about but overall feel pretty good about this one.

Me'erta Story



The Story of Me'erta—taken from book 28B.

Translation: Nick

First Draft

In the time of Me'erta, in the 196th year of his reign, Jolatha, his mother came to him in his bedroom. Now it was well known, throughout the city, of Me'erta and his craving (lust) for women. And none knew this weakness (a weakness of choice is more literal) more than his own mother. So it was that Jolatha brought with her the woman Ramel, who worshiped the Tree. Ramel's beauty was well known in D'ni, especially among those who worshipped the Tree and especially among the Kings. (Plural "Kings" is here, although I don't know why—maybe implied the whole Kings' palace or history—not sure.)

But as it was, though the King could have any object in D'ni, Ramel had been held from him by his mother until now. And she offered her son Ramel in exchange for her own purposes.

"But what are your purposes," the King asked. "For do you think me so foolish as to give you anything you want for a mere woman?"

"Of course not, my son. But as you know, you have watched Ramel from afar for many years. You have talked to your advisors and plotted the ways in which you could make her yours. But you have been unable even to look upon her so closely until this day. Until this day that I have brought her to you. So do not think I am so foolish as to believe that this woman is a mere woman."

"You have spoken truthfully. In fact, as I gaze upon her now, I have never imagined her to be so beautiful. She is like a statue, without flaw. But even so, do you think I would give you whatever you wish for even a woman such as this?"

Now Jolatha was cunning (?) and Me'erta was eager (?) for Ramel. And every day Jolatha brought the woman into the King's bedroom and every day she offered her son the woman Ramel in exchange for her own purposes.

And as the nights passed, Me'erta became unsatisfied with those who were already his. He became spiteful of those who came to his bedroom, for none compared to the woman Ramel whom his mother continued to withhold from him. And finally he could resist his mother's arguments no longer.

And Jolatha came to his bedroom with the woman Ramel. And King Me'erta began to speak.

"The woman has ruined my life. There is none like her in all my Ages, and you bring her to this room night after night. Those who I have found beautiful have faded in comparison to this one and I no longer find pleasure in them. Therefore I am no longer satisfied with anything and I will not be satisfied until this woman is mine. What is it that you ask of me? Whatever it is I will give, you have my word."

"Very well, my son. I will talk to you tomorrow."

And Jolatha gave the woman Ramel, of the worshippers of the Tree, to her son. And Ramel was King Me'erta's from that day forward.

At dawn of the next day, Jolatha came to Me'erta while he was still sleeping and told him her purposes.

"The Guild of Writers has long had their rules, their restrictions, and their ancient oaths. But you realize, my son, that these words are old now, and no longer the ways of our people. Ri'neref was responsible for them and they are like a collar (?) around our necks, growing ever tighter and preventing us from moving forward. It is time that we are freed."

Even Me'erta was disturbed. "But there are none who would agree to this. The oath is as stone. It cannot be altered for it has never been. And yet not only do you ask me to change the oath, but contradict the things it says?"

And Jolatha grew angry. "Are you so foolish? Do you think I ask you to carry out the impossible? There is but one thing that must be changed. One thing that will give us freedom. It is the D'ni who have created the Art as we know it, not Yahvo. Thus, since it is true, it is us who can determine the rules of the Art, not the ancient religious writings.

"They will view it as blasphemy," the King responded. "But I will do as you say."

And so, King Me'erta spoke to the Guild of Writers. His words were well crafted, often

from his mother, and his arguments strong, for they too Jolatha gave him. And his effort was great, for there was no other woman besides Ramel and it was the woman that he lived for.

However, though many in the Guild of Writers were easily convinced by the sharp words of the King, there was one who was not. Grand Master Tremal was old in age and wise beyond even his years. And his decision was hard (the word is a certain kind of stone that was considered to be the most hard and immovable) and he would not be moved.

"Never will we change what Ailesh has written in the oaths. Never will we change what we have spoken for generations. Never will we allow a crack to be opened in the great wall of our Guild. For is it Terahnee that you seek. But is Terahnee not the reason we exist?"

For Tremal could see the plans of Jolatha even in the words of the King. And Tremal knew that if the ancient religious writings did not determine their fate, the hearts of men would rule, and there would be nothing to stop Jolatha from having her way.

And so for three days, Tremal stood to the words of the King. For three days the King would return to his palace and receive new words from his mother. For three days the anger of Jolatha burned against Tremal and grew stronger.

And so it was that on the fourth day, when the King was no longer welcome to the Guild, Grand Master Tremal was found hanging from a tree, his body covered in blood.

The King was sad when he heard the news, for he held no bitterness in his heart toward Tremal. But when Jolatha heard the news she was overjoyed and ordered the King to the Guild of Writers to change the oath and carry out her own purposes.

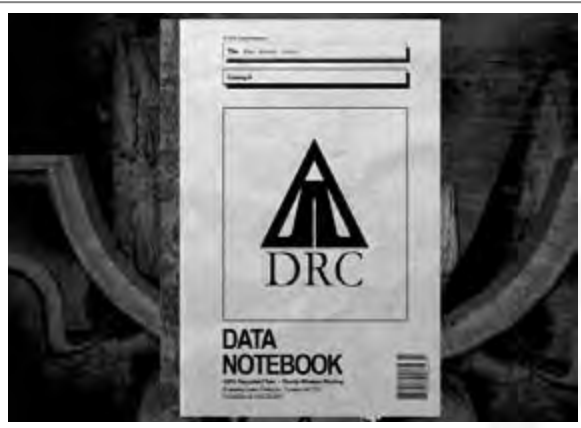
But as it was, the death of Tremal had breathed boldness into the Guild and in unison they denounced the wicked evil that had killed their Grand Master and vowed that the oaths of their Guild would never be changed and that there would be no more discussions.

So Jolatha devised other plans for she knew that even she could not change such determined (the same word as used above—the hardened stone) guildsmen.

And King Me'erta lived with Ramel and he was satisfied with all those who visited his room again. Even as he was filled with pleasure, Jolatha plotted evil, and the city in which he lived grew weak.

Probably ready for a Dr. Watson review.

Great Zero Journal



The Great Zero journal was one of the single most important journals I discovered during my explorations in D'ni. It provided clear (but not always complete) directions for recalibrating the Great Zero, a device used by the D'ni KIs to determine their exact position in the cavern. I referred to my copy of this journal many times during the later parts of my journey.

DRAFT COPY

1.04 DRC

Welcome to the Great Zero!

You'll notice a number of different areas to the Great Zero structure as well as a number of various machines. We apologize for the great detail but the structure and related mechanisms and systems are somewhat complicated.

Antechamber

You are currently standing in the Great Zero antechamber. Though you can see the Great Zero machinery through the small window, access to the Great Zero courtyard is not available directly from the antechamber. In order to access the plaza, you will need to upload five Great Zero Markers (GZMs) into the Great Zero system and link into the plaza via your Nexus.

Great Zero Marker (GZM) Uploads

Great Zero Markers, found in numerous locations throughout the cavern, are fairly easy to find and, by following a few easy steps, simple to upload into the system.

1. Once you have a KI version 2.0 or higher (which you have if you've linked here by way of the Nexus), you still need to upgrade your KI to retrieve marker coordinates. That can be done easily by placing your KI into the upload machine in this room. The first time a KI is inserted, the system will enable your KI to retrieve markers. If you see five faint colored lights on your KI, then you have properly enabled your KI to retrieve markers.

2. Find GZMs. They are located throughout the cavern in a variety of locations. (Please note that markers can be in a large variety of places, not just the more common paths.) However, be aware that these markers will not be visible unless they sense an upgraded KI within 25 feet.

3. Before the point they are visible to the naked eye (as long as there is an unobstructed view), the small light on your KI will also begin to flash as an indicator. Once you see the GZM, you will need to touch it. You will know the GZM has been registered if one of the faint lights turns solid.

4. Once you have found five GZMs (and have five solid lights on your KI) you will need to return here, to the antechamber, and upload your GZMs into the system. You can use the same machine you used to initiate your KI to do that.

Great Zero Courtyard

1. Once you have uploaded five GZMs, you will find a new link in your Nexus. That link will take you to the Great Zero courtyard, the central location of the Great Zero neutrino dispenser.

2. You will see another upload machine inside of the courtyard as well as a couple of doors toward the back of the room.

Great Zero Calibration Center Access

1. The calibration center located beyond the courtyard cannot be accessed unless a KI has registered more GZMs (more than the five that are needed to access the courtyard). Registering is done the same way as listed above; you'll have a new set of faint lights. As GZMs are found, they will turn solid again.

2. Once the second set of GZMs have been uploaded (in either the courtyard or the antechamber) the doors leading to the calibration center will automatically open for you from that point forward.

Great Zero Calibration Center

1. Most important to the calibration center are the four Great Zero Maintenance Units (GZMU) toward the back, as well as the Calibration Imager (CI).

2. Once you have uploaded 20 GZMs in upload machines in either the antechamber or courtyard, you will be allowed access to the machines and the ability to find a new type of marker known as a Calibration Great Zero Marker (CGZM).

Calibration Great Zero Markers (CGZMs)

1. Once you have reached the Great Zero calibration center, your KI only needs to finish the calibration process by synchronizing calibrations with the Great Zero itself.

2. There are four machines that enable you to carry out the final task.

3. You will need to receive a coordinate from one of the three machines (the fourth is not yet available) and find the single marker at that coordinate. Similar to the early markers, it will only become visible when you have entered a certain radius, and you will have to touch it. After you have found the first one, you will need to return to the calibration center and insert your KI into one of the machines. At that time you will be able to read one of the three coordinates on your KI.

4. After the second you will be able to read two.

5. After the third, you will be able to read three.

6. At that point the fourth will become available.

7. After you have found the fourth marker, your KI will be calibrated.

8. If the Great Zero has not been turned on, it will also be turned on. (Is that true Laxman? We obviously haven't tested this.)

9. And you're finished. Congratulations.

We at the DRC hope that this document has provided you a better understanding of the KI and Great Zero functionality. We also hope you realize how vital your success is to help calibrate our Great Zero. We appreciate your support greatly. (Is this too mushy? Might be a little over-the-top.)

Again, thank you for visiting the Great Zero and we appreciate your patience and support.

Dr. Watson's Journal



I found Dr. Richard A. Watson's journal at the very end of my journey in a rest area between D'ni and the surface. It explains what went wrong with the DRC's attempted restoration of D'ni and gives a clue as to what happened to its author, the former head of the DRC. The more time I spend rereading it, the more convinced I am that my journey is just beginning.

12.26.03

I can't take it. After all of our efforts to ensure everyone's safety down here in the cavern, yet another accident has taken the life of another friend. It's too much.

For years I've been stressing that the restoration must be handled carefully—that extreme caution should be our byword. There is no reason to rush.

Then recently, the explorers began showing up. Despite our warnings, despite our statements that we're moving and working as quickly as we safely can, it wasn't fast enough for them. They just don't comprehend. We've been working down here for over ten years! Yet they think they know better, that we can "just approve areas more quickly." I have tried to impress upon them the importance of moving slowly. Deliberately. Carefully. My warnings seemed to fall on deaf ears. Their enthusiasm is understandable. Their disregard for the safety of the people down here is not.

Then Phil returned. He'd been gone over a year after he disappeared behind the door we were unable to open in Eder Kemo. We had worried about him, hoping he was still OK. It was great to have him back and know he

was OK. But he was just as willing to risk his safety and disregard our precautions as the explorers. Now, just a few weeks after his return, he was in an unauthorized area today and was killed when a wall collapsed on him.

The accidents must be stopped! It started with Branch being killed in an accident in one of our trips in '91. Then the death of Elias in '93 because his obsession with the restoration had caused him to neglect his health. Then all the needless injuries suffered by various restoration engineers over the years. And, now the death of Phil. That is the final straw. It has to stop. I cannot bear the responsibility of the restoration any longer. The price is too high!

12.31.03

I don't know where I am going. I've been wandering the tunnels for days. No direction, no purpose. Trying to clear my head.

1.1.04

Nothing happy about this New Year.

1.4.04

I keep running over it in my head. I've been so committed to this project for so long, maybe I've been deluding myself about the truth. What if we've been wrong all along? What if Jeff's been right?

1.8.04

Maybe the restoration should take a completely different direction. It's hard to imagine that I'm saying this. I'm still in denial that we've spent so many years of our lives heading in the wrong direction. But the very fact that I can even entertain that as a possibility means something.

1.9.04

The restoration cannot continue as we had planned. It breaks my heart, but I know deep down that it's true.

So much time, so many plans, so much... gone. So much.

I still can't believe I'm even thinking this, but that's the way it has to be.

Will the other restoration members understand? Maybe.

The explorers won't, I'm sure.

Can't be helped. The restoration can't continue after these events.

But all that work. All the progress we were making. No words to describe how angry it makes me, even while knowing inside that this is how it must be. Such a waste!

1.10.04

No! There must be a way! Something else we can do to continue the restoration and still ensure everyone's safety. Surely now that people have seen tragedy firsthand, they'll recognize how important our caution is.

1.12.04

Depression.

It won't work. We tried that for months. Even Phil's death won't change it.

1.14.04

I realize now that Atrus was right. He said that the city in the cavern should not be restored. I believed for years that his admonition didn't include those of us from the surface, that we could somehow be a loophole in his concerns. But he was right. I finally see that now.

1.15.04

What do we do now?

1.16.04

Phil said that he had been on a journey and was convinced that there was a better way.

I need to talk to Ikuro.

1.17.04

I find myself here...in a familiar place, that suddenly holds so much more meaning. Here at the very crossroads, the pivotal juncture of D'ni and Human intertwining. This very room where Ti'ana once rested with her young son Gehn; where Gehn and his own son Atrus slept along their journey. This small room, on the

culsp of the grandest of rooms. A tiny resting place half of the distance up (or down) the Great Shaft itself; a pause half way between here and there.

I find myself here....

It's been my pause. My chance to ponder. I've been wandering for three weeks, grieving, thinking, fasting, reflecting...pausing. Pausing from the cares of work, of rebuilding, of rules, of structure, of people and places, of frictions and factions...of life and death.

And now I realize that I have only looked on D'ni as bones. My rebuilding was only an attempt to reassemble the dried dead bones into a dried dead skeleton—no more alive, but arranged to poorly mimic what once was alive. I somehow thought that those dried bones would live again and become the storyteller—telling me the things I long to know.

I still long to know; I still feel a calling. I am meant to be part of D'ni, somehow. I am drawn here because it holds an answer for me. But now I understand that I need more than a dead story from a pile of bones. I need a storyteller who lives.

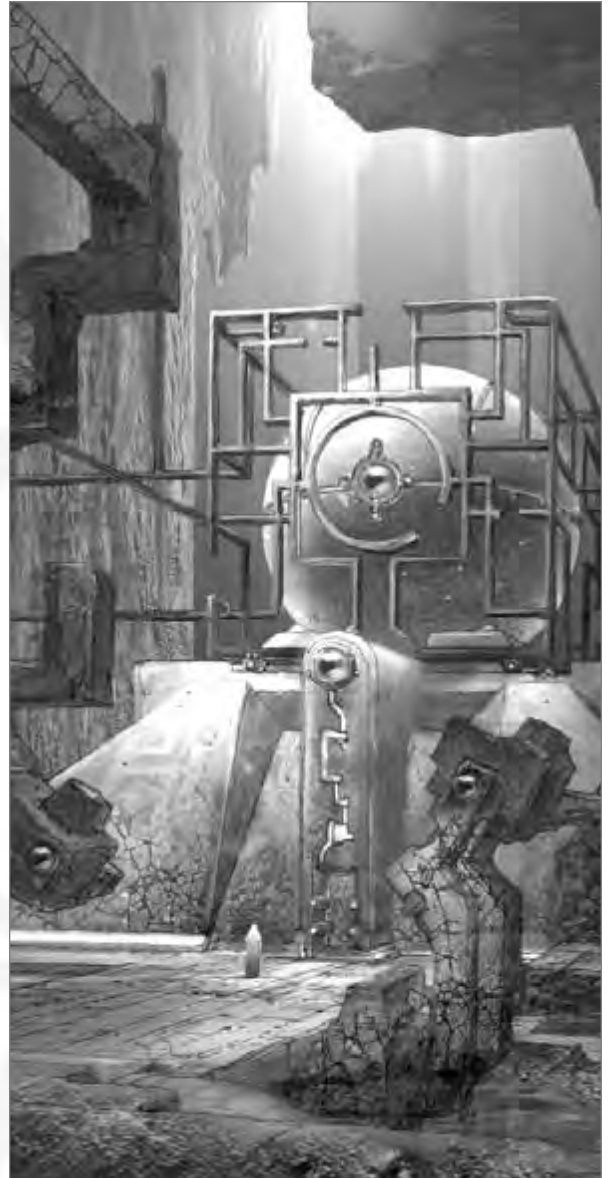
And so here I am, small, on the edge of vast unknown—this place that seems so appropriate. I have come to a conclusion. A conclusion that goes against who I was, but fills me with life and hope. I will take a leap of faith. I will take a new journey—the journey that Phil encouraged me to take for myself—a journey that is out of my control. I will jump into something, and lose myself. Take a journey to places unknown, whose end is not yet written....

I will follow Yeesha's mysterious beckoning. Somehow even writing it lifts my spirit! I am returning to the surface to do just that.

And you, friend (if you have not already done so) should do the same. Leap without truly understanding what lies beneath, and let a glimpse of the future rise up to meet you.

I'm terrified, but also full of hope that D'ni can now truly be restored, alive again.

And the storyteller will be alive—and it will be me.



Path of the Shell Journals

Every note, journal, or other written pieces of information that I found during my journey along the path of the shell are included in this chapter. Some of the writings were essential for solving the many riddles I encountered on my quest, while others served to deepen my understanding of D'ni's long-dead culture. They are reprinted here in the order in which I found them.

Words of the Watcher



Six volumes of the Watcher's writing appeared in my Relto at the start of my journey.

When I first returned to my Relto to begin my journey along the path of the shell, I found that six blue leather-bound journals had been added to my library. The first was a personal journal written by the Watcher, which served as an introduction of sorts to the path of the shell; the other five were translations of the Watcher's prophecy, *Words*.

Watcher's Journal



On the six hundred and twenty fifth day of my life, I was gazing upon the star of Ces in the sky of the Age of Windring. And at the time of my birth, the star began to brighten until it became brighter than the rings themselves. And with a sudden brilliance it turned the night into day. And I beheld the fire of the Maker. And he spoke to me. And the fire of the Maker left me, and I saw only blackness, because my eyes were blinded. But his words remained....

"You will wait for a time. And you will watch for a time more. And you will receive the signs—signs of things that have been, and signs of things that will be. And great wisdom will be passed through you so that those who come after you will know that I am the Maker.

"You will watch for the signs of the builders. For the builders will make great things of D'ni. And D'ni will grow and prosper. But this prosperity is a curse. So the sign of the builders is a curse.

"You will watch for the signs of the breakers. For the breakers will make nothing of D'ni. And D'ni will die. But this death is a blessing. So the sign of the breakers is a blessing.

"You will watch for the signs of the grower. For the grower will see the dead tree, and the grower will see the new sprigs, and the grower will prune. The grower will grow the new D'ni. So the sign of the grower is a blessing."

And so for one day I watched and waited for the signs. But there were none.

And so for four more days I watched and waited for the signs. But there were none.

And so for twenty more days I watched and waited for the signs. But there were none.

And so for one hundred more days I watched and waited for the signs. But there were none.

And so for six hundred more days I watched and waited for the signs. But there were none.

And I cried out to the Maker, "How long will you make me watch and wait, for I am weary?"

And the Maker replied, "You will watch and wait until the signs come, for you are the watcher."

And so for one more month I watched and waited for the signs. But there were none.

And so for four more months I watched and waited for the signs. But there were none.

And so for twenty more months I watched and waited for the signs. But there were none.

And so for one hundred more months I watched and waited for the signs. But there were none.

And so for six hundred more months I watched and waited for the signs.

And many years had passed, and I was weary, but still I watched.

And at the time of my birth on that final day, as I waited near the cavern of Rolep, a wind blew through the cavern, and my sight was restored. And the first thing I looked upon was the stairs of Rolep. And I climbed to the top and looked out at the great tree of D'ni, and wept. And the Maker spoke these words....

"Behold you have watched for me, and now I will bless you. Today I have given you your sight, and tomorrow you will prosper. I will give you wisdom, but I will keep you from pride. The wisdom I give, you will not understand, it is for those to come. Be humble and write the wisdom that I will show you."

And so on the first day the Maker gave me five lines of wisdom. And I wrote the first five lines in five sections—one in each section.

And so on the second day, the Maker gave me five more lines of wisdom. And these lines became the second lines in each of the five sections.

For one hundred and twenty five days the Maker gave me five lines of wisdom on each day. And they were added to the sections.

And then I rested.

And this is how these words of the Maker were given to me. But I know not whether they are signs of things that have been, or signs of things that will be. And these lines I have written so that those who come after me will know the wisdom of the Maker.

Words, Section 1



1. Revere the Maker; cherish the made.
2. Here lies wisdom.
- 3.
4. The door lies at the end of the path.
5. Who will gather? Many.
6. Who will finish? Few.
- 7.
8. The grower will take time.
9. The grower will bring light.
10. The grower will have Ages.
11. Take time, and move it to and fro.
12. Bring light, and give it to the dark places.
13. Have Ages, and link to them without bindings.
- 14.
15. Loud cries yet again.
16. Can it be made? No.
17. We mourn our loss.
18. No one sees.

- 19.
20. In rock is where changes are found.
21. Because of tunnels D'ni has changed forever.
22. New events surround us.
23. Awaiting our arrival.
- 24.
25. The path to the left or right?
26. That is the only power of man.
- 27.
28. The grower leads in the dark.
29. While the deceiver flails in the light.
30. The grower raises truth in the absence of eyes.
31. While the deceiver blesses them in clear view of many.
32. Without the grower, those who are like the grower would never learn.
33. Without the grower, the name known by all would not have existed.
- 34.
35. Knowing the least is the path of wisdom.
36. A sweet aroma rising up.
37. Kings and prophets, the proud ones have the stench of death.
38. The passing of time brings the path to the gathered.
39. A breach has been cut, and now the paths are joined.
40. The giving of gifts heals the wound of the builder.
- 41.
42. In cages they weep.
43. Time and again.
44. But without their tears.
45. Truth remains hidden.
- 46.
47. Your cry is your call.
48. If no one will hear them, weep for us.
- 49.
50. The choices of the wise bring pleasure to the Maker.
51. The meeting of worlds is death and life.
- 52.
53. They count years and months.
54. A long week is as short as an age is long.
- 55.
56. There is noise where once there was silence.
57. Light where once there was not.
58. Stone stands tall.
59. And rock falls down.
60. And they are watched.
61. Always.
62. Not knowing.
63. Silence will return.
64. Light will fade.
65. Stone will fall.
66. Rock will grow.
67. Again.
- 68.
69. From the shadow of the wound, history will be rewritten.
70. The disease will spread until D'ni cannot be saved.
- 71.
72. Seven they are.
73. Though little do they realize
74. Only four is seen as they see.
75. For seven is one.
76. And one is seven.
- 77.
78. Writing of links is a gift to be cherished.
- 79.
80. Where are our people?
81. Who are our people?
82. What are our people?
83. Cry those who die on the streets.
- 84.
85. The crumbling of the walls will come from within.
86. The stories of the destroyer will be the start of the burden.
87. The burdened one will come from outside.
88. The burden of the remnant will be laid upon his shoulders.

89. Be still and the path will be made known.
 90.
 91. What will grow?
 92. The tree of all things.
 93. Who will grow it?
 94. The grower.
 95.
 96. Pages burn.
 97. Ink spills.
 98. Is there no one to protect us?
 99. When we turn against ourselves.
 100.
 101. Books will be your stronghold, and then you will die.
 102. The destroyer will cut down this great tree of wickedness.
 103. Another place will be their refuge,
 104. Another place will be their home.
 105. Dance and celebrate, for the tree grows again.
 106.
 107. Seven nameless abused;
 108. Six called abused;
 109. Five sent away;
 110. Four sell to three;
 111. Three excepted without eighteen;
 112. Two one of eight;
 113. One wears color and holds paper.
 114.
 115. Poison fills the hearts of many;
 116. New air enters some.
 117. Believe.
 118.
 119. The scream you hear has no breath.
 120. Old ways are kept just to test.
 121.
 122. Curses reign upon the others;
 123. From the lips of the proud.
 124. Eyes are removed,
 125. Yet sight is restored.

Words, Section 2



1. Do not trust the sons of the burdened one.
2. They will seek comfort in their books.
3. This is the warning of the fall.
4. Do not seek comfort in your books.
5. When destruction comes, other ages will not save you.
- 6.
7. Seen under bones in the jail cells,
8. A row of keys is here.
- 9.
10. Minds are soft, hearts are callused.
11. In the new place chaos reigns.
12. Wisdom is hidden.
13. But a storm approaches, and a new river flows.
14. Its waters of deep red stain the land.
15. Cross the valley of dry sand and new blooms will appear.
16. Wisdom is found.
- 17.
18. The action of the gathered means nothing.
19. The action of the deceived is toiling in vain.
- 20.
21. The dam has been destroyed,
22. And the river opened.
23. He who unleashed its fury
24. Screams for mercy, and calls for help.
25. But no one comes.

26. As death drowns him,
27. It takes everything in its path.
- 28.
29. Darkness makes the righteous humble and the evil bold.
30. Darkness comes at the end of time.
31. Take the path upward, or those above will travel downward.
32. Seek the path of the shell.
33. The meeting of worlds is destruction and blessing.
34. The kingdom of D'ni is not made of rock and stone, but heart and mind.
- 35.
36. They rejoice at a spark,
37. Though they never see the fire.
38. They rejoice at a star,
39. Though they never see the sun.
40. They honor magicians,
41. And never know of true power.
42. They bow to liars,
43. Because truth cannot wait.
- 44.
45. When the tree dies there will come a new one.
46. A grower to learn of the death.
47. A grower to see new life.
48. A grower to bring the gathered.
49. A grower to restore the least.
50. A grower to move through time.
51. A grower to link at will.
52. A grower to follow the shell.
53. A grower to banish the darkness.
54. A grower to graft the branches.
55. A grower to join the paths.
- 56.
57. Black turns to green.
58. Red and yellow fruits emerge.
59. And he laughs at the worm,
60. And soon there are many.
- 61.
62. The hill of fire allows them to find their way.
63. Evil follows their path.
64. One will take where another left off.
65. Vagabonds enter unknowingly.
66. Incomplete is the task at hand.
67. Soon there will be another.
- 68.
69. Thought not a King, the Ruler dies.
70. The spilling of his blood
71. Creates rivers in the city.
- 72.
73. He laughs and smiles and cries at him
74. And the one with him.
75. Another teaches,
76. So that the choices are ours.
- 77.
78. The patient find solace in the wait,
79. While the restless follow the path of folly.
80. Follow the patient path.
- 81.
82. There are three who live in darkness and silence.
83. Blinded are those who search for them.
84. One saves D'ni and dies
85. At the hands of rulers.
86. Another destroys D'ni and lives
87. At the hands of followers.
88. There is another who both destroys and saves;
89. Both lives and dies,
90. At the hands of both rulers and followers.
91. While there is always strength in the hidden,
92. There is great trust in those who live and die.
- 93.
94. The Maker uses the made who are willing
95. He provides a light to discern the willing from the wicked.
96. A light in the cavern eases fear and provides comfort for the willing.
97. A light in the cavern causes the wicked to scurry to the darkness.
- 98.
99. A new life, in a new place, begins for a few;
100. Full of blessings, full of good.
101. But maturity does not come from ease and prosperity.
102. Prepare for suffering, and growth will come.

103.
104. Life dies, darkness spreads.
105. Day ends, Night grows.
106.
107. What is this invasion?
108. For the fourth time, they come.
109. Two come to war;
110. Two run from war;
111. Two die;
112. Two live although they kill.
113. All of them;
114. Above whom are none
115. They believe.
116.
117. So I say again
118. Seven they are,
119. Though little do they realize.
120. Only four is seen as they see.
121. For seven is one,
122. And one is seven.
123.
124. Libraries hold the writings of man.
125. Hearts hold the truth of the Maker.

Words, Section 3



1. Like a tree they spread.
2. Like a tree they unite.
3. Like a tree they spread.

4. Like a tree they unite.
5. It repeats over and over,
6. And brings fits to my sleep.
7. From many to one,
8. And one to many.
9.
10. Pause.
11. Harken unto my expressed summons as given.
12.
13. Remain.
14. Know you are meant to go through it and
wait nearby.
15.
16. Wait.
17. If you can be calm,
18. The way is a simple thing to gain.
19.
20. Linger.
21. Be quiet and see what's near.
22. You can open it.
23.
24. Do not forsake the Maker,
25. For the meaning of his name is only
for him.
26.
27. Mountains stand tall.
28. New water feeds the stagnant.
29. Through the minds of impostors
30. Comes new life.
31.
32. A puddle frozen in time
33. Brings strength to the weak.
34. Minds are forsaken,
35. And bodies are lost.
36.
37. A river of blood flows from the surface.
38.
39. It is written in the dark.
40. The ten eyes do not see it.
41. He creates alone;
42. Weary of what may come.
43.

44. Why does the Maker not know our choice?
45. Because he chooses not to know it.
46. He sees the branches of all choices.
47. He knows the paths of all possibilities.
48. But the pruning he has placed in the hands of man.
49. This is the strength and downfall of man.
50. This is how man will be measured.
- 51.
52. But it is many who will come
53. To revel in his joy;
54. To hide themselves from the eyes
55. Who do not see the path.
- 56.
57. One who finds, will need.
58. One who needs, will find.
59. And one who meets the needs of another
60. Will find his own needs met.
- 61.
62. They will subdue the weak and it will be their undoing.
63. From above will come destruction, from above will come new life.
64. The wound in the desert will bring forth the renewal of hope.
65. Bring the least, and expect nothing in return.
66. The passing of time brings the past to the present.
- 67.
68. Circles are the paths that lead to walls;
69. And return to the beginning.
- 70.
71. Take time to know the faces of stone.
72. Take time to understand the path of the shell.
73. What will crush you?
74. The weight of ordinances and laws.
75. What will lift you?
76. The wings of a heart for the Maker.
- 77.
78. The watcher will watch for words from the Maker.
79. The voice will speak the mind of the Maker.
80. The giver will grant the blessings of the Maker.
81. The destroyer will hold the knife of the Maker.
82. The seeker will share the truths of the Maker.
83. The grower will bring the life of the Maker.
84. The builder will build the peace of the Maker.
- 85.
86. First there is a one;
87. Followed by a nine.
88. Four leads a ten.
89. Numbers;
90. Cut into stone.
91. If understood they could save,
92. But their value is lost on the blind.
93. Look at the time they spend trying to see numbers.
94. There is no value in such numbers.
95. For only after are they understood.
96. Why do these numbers haunt us so?
97. They laugh upon us
98. And reveal our weakness;
99. In the face of the great time.
- 100.
101. Foolish men. Do you think that you are the only writers?
102. Who is the new writer? The rules are written within him.
- 103.
104. The rain starts and the tree will grow,
105. But are you the one to start it?
106. You did nothing but follow.
107. The grower is the one who leads.
- 108.
109. You toil and strive to write Ages and move stones.
110. The path of the stone is toil for the gathered.
- 111.
112. Ink will be shared,
113. And Ink will be lost.
- 114.
115. The Maker knows all the branches of the tree.
116. The Maker can send the knife or the water.
- 117.

- 118. And few will be greater than the grower.
- 119. For the grower will know pain.
- 120. And the wounds will make the least the greatest.
- 121. But do not be deceived.
- 122. Few ears in the low places will know the grower.
- 123. But many ears will hear those who claim to be the grower.
- 124. Only the ears of the new ones will hear the true grower.
- 125. Do not be deceived.

Words, Section 4



- 1. In the night they walk through the streets
- 2. Looking to one another for explanation;
- 3. Trying to understand the mourning that fills the city,
- 4. And prevent them from lying down.
- 5. Others ignore the wails.
- 6. They feel safe and talk as though they are immortal.
- 7. As they, too, succumb to death
- 8. They remember the restless nights.
- 9.
- 10. The number of the watcher is six hundred and twenty five.
- 11. It is the number of waiting.
- 12. It is the number of truth.
- 13.
- 14. You only need to ask what has been viewed to know.
- 15.
- 16. A heart for the least is the path to forgiveness.
- 17. Move your heart far from pride, and joy will come.
- 18.
- 19. A desert bird knows where to wait and watch.
- 20. A desert bird knows when the storm will come.
- 21. A desert bird knows where water will flow.
- 22. A desert bird knows when the tree will grow.
- 23.
- 24. A new five reign.
- 25. To bring them back;
- 26. To return;
- 27. To unite.
- 28.
- 29. A new one reigns.
- 30. To send them away;
- 31. To push away;
- 32. To divide.
- 33.
- 34. If more you seek,
- 35. Ask and then be given a ray of hope.
- 36.
- 37. A man pulls ten others behind him,
- 38. Because he believes.
- 39. Another lifeless body is thrown into the cart,
- 40. Because it doubts.
- 41. People line the street
- 42. Watching the cart go through their midst.
- 43. Wondering what they should choose,
- 44. And where their own body will be soon.
- 45.
- 46. Learn from the least, for their burden is great.
- 47. A bird from the desert will build a nest in the tree.
- 48.
- 49. There is a circle of seasons,

50. Death and life,
51. Until a final end.
52. The way is made clear at the end of time.
- 53.
54. Do not fear the wound, it is a way of peace in time of need.
55. A place of patience;
56. A place of stone;
57. The gathered are known by their faces of stone.
58. A place to fall;
59. A place to be raised;
60. The gathered will fall into the wound.
- 61.
62. Like the lelam
63. Expanding in size
64. But lessening in thickness.
65. Expanding in territory.
66. Swallowing enemies and smaller beasts
67. But dying slowly.
68. For what they eat is of little value.
69. And what they consume destroys the stomach.
70. So they continue to expand,
71. Until there is nothing left where they started.
- 72.
73. Winds of change blow from above.
74. Feel the wind, it will move you.
- 75.
76. The little ones destroy;
77. The little ones rebuild;
78. The little ones remove;
79. The little ones give back.
- 80.
81. The future is always revealed to those who wait.
82. But the proud have no patience.
83. Because of pride, the destruction will come.
- 84.
85. This is your one answer.
86. What is given is proof of it.
- 87.
88. The wound gives birth to the rebuilder of pride.
89. The wound takes the age of the rebuilder of pride.
- 90.
91. A new five reign;
92. To bring them home;
93. To return their life;
94. To unite their desires.
- 95.
96. Rest in the light.
97. Call in the dark.
98. Sing in the time of joy.
99. Weep in the time of pride.
- 100.
101. A new one reigns;
102. To send them away to what is good;
103. To return them to what is right;
104. To unite them to what is true.
- 105.
106. A heart for pleasure is a filthy pit of binding.
107. A heart for the Maker is a clean breath of release.
- 108.
109. For they have claimed a share of a very old order.
- 110.
111. I see the tree
112. With only one branch.
113. What misery
114. To watch it fall
115. And never grow.
- 116.
117. Nothing but a seed;
118. A seed that grows slowly;
119. Roots grow, fed by water;
120. Growing upward, only one.
- 121.
122. The remnant will live in plenty,
123. Until a time of testing comes.
124. The remnant will learn of the Maker
125. From one who learns of the Maker.

Words, Section 5



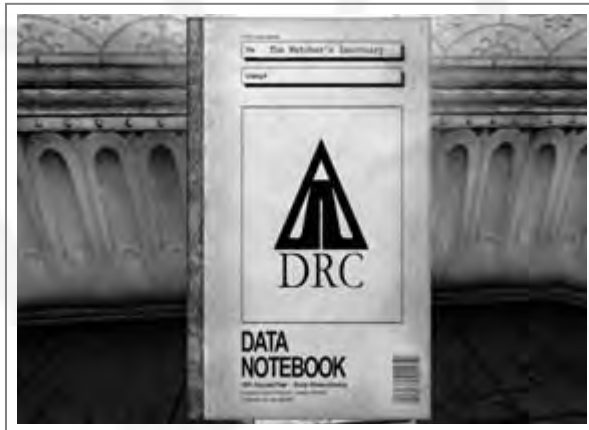
1. Do my wishes deceive me?
2. I have never seen like this before.
3. Darkness and tears fill my eyes,
4. But not today.
5. No longer do they mourn;
6. No longer do they not realize their path.
7. Is this the ending?
8. Is this what I wait for?
9. There can be no deception
10. With such dreams that outweigh my own.
11. Does this end have to leave so soon?
12. Do not take the end from me.
- 13.
14. Do not put out the least, for they
will save you.
15. The gathered will tell of the path of
the shell.
16. The bound will know of the path of
the stone.
17. Words are many, but action is what is
desired.
18. The gathered will find rest when the
light comes.
- 19.
20. The circle is broken;
21. The metal melted in the fire.
22. Strangely the cloth does not burn.
23. The cloth of many;
24. It remains in the fire
25. And produces new life.

26. Though the circle is gone,
27. It has brought triumph.
- 28.
29. The dreams of the wise are a gift from
the Maker.
30. The cleft is a blessing to the gathered.
31. Contempt is a gift from the accuser.
32. Roll the stone to know the deceiver.
- 33.
34. They ask for it again.
35. They cry out for yesterday.
36. They want wisdom united
37. Under one.
38. "Never," he says.
39. That time has vanished.
40. Misery will be great
41. If that ancient place is visited again.
- 42.
43. Can a dead tree grow again?
44. A man looks and sees death.
45. It has been cut to nothing.
46. There are no more branches,
47. And no future is seen.
48. But the Maker looks and sees life
49. Beneath the death and destruction.
50. A drop of water falls from the sky,
51. And begins the journey downward.
52. And the roots drink deeply.
53. With the wisdom of the grower, a new
branch will grow.
- 54.
55. The burdened one will write to save
worlds, and save one.
56. The dreamer will dream to save worlds,
and save many.
57. The path is folly for those who toil.
58. The path is wise for those who wait.
- 59.
60. I see the tree, with so many branches.
61. What a sight!
62. To watch it fall, and grow again.
- 63.
64. Can teeth replace Books?
65. Can hands replace Ink?

66. Can mirrors replace memory?
 67. Can one replace the many?
 68. When such things are believed
 69. So an ending nears.
 70.
 71. The Maker listens to D'ni,
 72. And he hears nothing.
 73.
 74. All of them look over you.
 75. And they do not see the right path.
 76. Follow the path of light, enter a new beginning.
 77.
 78. They seek answers in Ink and Paper
 79. And only find truth.
 80. They seek change in truth
 81. And only find empty hearts.
 82.
 83. They follow the truth and denounce all that is within.
 84. Evil is buried as quickly as love.
 85. They study the truth and denounce all choice.
 86. Evil is shunned as quickly as good.
 87. They write the truth and denounce all that came before.
 88. Perfection is sought as quickly as evil.
 89.
 90. Seek knowledge and you will find evil.
 91. Seek wisdom and you will find knowledge.
 92. Seek truth and you will find wisdom.
 93. Seek love and you will find truth.
 94.
 95. A new river flows through the land;
 96. Its paths are chosen wisely.
 97. The waters have lived through many dry lands
 98. And are no longer deceived by imaginary images.
 99. There are some who hear it roar through the land;
 100. Some see the dark waves and ripples.
 101. Those who refuse to acknowledge that it flows
 102. Are swept away by the storm that follows.

103.
 104. Make a path to the sun,
 105. And the light will shine upon you.
 106. Make a path to the sky,
 107. And the storms will come.
 108.
 109. A new tree buries the beliefs of old;
 110. A tree of stone and power.
 111. Deep roots sustain it;
 112. Roots that absorb the waters of the past;
 113. Waters long forgotten
 114. But still flowing underground;
 115. Under new trees, with barks of life
 116. And rings of stone.
 117.
 118. Under the sun is the bringer of destruction.
 119. To the wound the bringer of pride returns.
 120. But the son of the son will carry the burden.
 121. And his wife will face the storm.
 122. Give him a pen, and he will plan.
 123. Give her a pen, and she will dream.
 124. And a daughter will carry the burden of her father.
 125. And the daughter of the daughter will live in peace.

Watcher's Sanctuary Journal



Found in the Watcher's Sanctuary, this journal was a written transcription of voice notes made by Simpson of the DRC. It is an invaluable glimpse into the history and purpose of the Watcher's Sanctuary.r)

Age: The Watcher's Sanctuary

Date: 10/7/02 & 4/19/03—Two trips

Okay, where to get started. The room itself is actually pretty simple and, at first glance, doesn't seem to have much to it. Well, for your average explorer. There is actually much more here than meets the eye. Much more, at least as far as history. It's practically dripping off the walls. Fortunately, I dig that stuff. (Lucky for you, I'm also better than your average explorer.)

Might be getting ahead of myself. Structure. Circular room with a number of doorways leading off in each direction. Large staircase, might need some support work, leads to an upper level. Okay, this just doesn't work without knowing some of the history and story behind this place. I gotta start there.

I've done some translation and talked with Watson; this is great stuff.

Alright, the tree off the balcony. (I did do a little walking around.) I can't see it well—dark—but it's an old tree—don't know exactly when it was created, although certain style and material elements suggest as far back as the early 2000s, long before a guy called the Watcher came around. And it's the Watcher that this place was created for, renovated for, and dedicated to from the time it was built in the late 4000s, until the Fall of D'ni.

The Watcher lived during the mid 4000s and spent most of that life on hidden, secluded Ages. He wrote a book called *Words*—a prophetic book. Nostradamus-type guy. Strange. Though it doesn't seem his prophecies caught on real well at first, through a variety of events—you can ask somebody else if you want to know them all—the guy became more and more popular, then faded, then popular again. You know the deal. There was always a core group of followers, but the overall population wavered. I would imagine depending on how accurate they viewed his visions. Over the course of time, a whole lot of copies of his books were printed. We've found plenty of them.

As I mentioned, the tree (which I still don't know how to actually get to) was built long before the Watcher. No one at the DRC seems to know exactly what it was for—best guesses are that the tree was built early on as a representation of the D'ni that had come here: the new tree. They definitely had a thing for trees.

So, the Watcher comes along and writes some prophecies. They end up becoming pretty popular, and they do deal quite a bit with the tree (as much of D'ni prophecy does) and an unknown guy builds this building with the tree as its "focus." Seems like the building was an upper class lounge or sitting room, pub ... something along those lines. The intellectuals come and discuss the philosophies and politics of the day, although there was some homage being paid to the Watcher and his thoughts and ideas.

This "sanctuary" or whatever you want to call it, stayed successful even while ownership changed—it seems it changed as frequently as the philosophies and religious views of the people. It wasn't until Kadish came along, yes our good friend Kadish, that the thing really took off. Unfortunately, right before the Fall. I've just realized I haven't moved in the past few minutes. I'm standing in a building giving an analysis of it without moving. Gotta love history.

So back to it. Nice little coves in this place. Wouldn't be bad at all with a cigar and—okay, Kadish and the Fall.

Kadish was the last guy to own it and it seems he did some renovations. This is where the history and current day setup get interesting.

The Watcher spoke quite a bit, in *Words*, about someone known as the Grower. The Grower is prophesied to do a number of things, and it seems there were numerous interpretations of the Grower: some saw this person as little more than a great lord or king, while others saw this person as a superhuman miracle worker, godlike...conquering time, space, and dimension and everything else. The views on the Grower were as varied as you can imagine.

What's important is that Kadish viewed himself as the Grower, as the one the Watcher had prophesied about. As a result, he modified the pub to honor, not only the prophet, but himself as well. He seemed to be intent on fulfilling as many of the prophecies as he could. So he built this puzzling "path of the shell" to the tree, brought the Er'Cana Book here (Kadish was the engineer behind its construction), brought the Ahnonay Book here and claimed that it allowed him to travel through time, back to the D'ni home world as it was, as it is, and as it would be (Kadish claimed he wrote the Book). All of these things to fulfill the prophecies. Even the times of D'ni were significant because the Watcher claimed to see visions of the past,

present, and future. As a result, he wrote what he saw, never knowing if it would occur in the future, had already occurred in the past, or was occurring as he wrote.

People flocked to the place. Not only was it the only way to travel through time, but Kadish himself was the only one who could solve the spiral path of the shell and access the tree. In fact, he would demonstrate his ability to anyone who wanted to come and watch. Nightly challenges were held to see if anyone else could access the room. It seems no one ever did; further confirmation of Kadish as the Grower.

Kadish bragged that the Watcher clearly spoke of how to solve the room in his prophecies and that anyone could find the solution there. Easy to say when you did build the thing ... maybe I don't get something. Either way, good luck reading through all of those and figuring out anything, let alone the solution to some kind of weird D'ni puzzle.

So, it seems that Kadish ran the sanctuary up to the end. Obviously, at some point we know he died. We've all seen the remains of the poor guy. An odd end for a guy that seemed to have so much—had a Book right there but didn't use it. But that's another story.

Okay, history out of the way, and I guess I should finish with this spiral path room. I'm not a big puzzle guy, but the room seems very confusing. A switch closes the door and turns on the light and some mechanism releases the ball back to its starting point. There are numbers scratched into the walls of the maze as well. Enough of that. I can see myself going crazy in a place like this. Ah, the D'ni.

Oddly there is no physical access to/from the city that surrounds the building. We know the building is up in J'taeri—a nice district—but there is definitely no way to get in from the outside and visa versa. Not sure if Kadish sealed it up or if it always was, but I would bet the second idea. Makes it handy to limit access—if you don't have a Book you're not getting here. (And that would explain why the Books here were never destroyed or taken.)

That's it for now. I'll probably get back here again after checking Er'Cana and Ahnonay.



Yeesha's note

Yeesha's Note

I found this note in K'veer at the end of my journey. It was written by Yeesha to her father, Atrus:

Father,

I know you can not hear me, yet I must write to you. In my heart, you will hear my voice, the voice of your desert bird.

Words written to me, for me, and of me. Who would believe that the tree would die, so that I could grow it again? You always did. Your desert bird was so much more and I understand you now. You knew, though I did not.

Now I know. I know much, Father. I have learned of the death.

I am powerful, Father. I have seen new life, and brought it forth myself.

And I go now to become the grower. If only you could see. Perhaps you do.

3:118¹

2:45-55²

I am Yeesha.

I am the Grower.

Thank you, Father.

Your burden is lifted.

1. Watcher's Words 3:118: "And few will be greater than the grower."
2. Watcher's Words 2:45-55: "When the tree dies there will come a new one. A grower to learn of the death. A grower to see new life. A grower to bring the gathered. A grower to restore the least. A grower to move through time. A grower to link at will. A grower to follow the shell. A grower to banish the darkness. A grower to graft the branches. A grower to join the paths."

PART FIVE: THE MAKING OF URU



CHAPTER 15



THE EARLY DAYS

In 1993, a fledgling four-man game development studio by the name of Cyan finished work on *Myst*, a point-and-click interactive adventure that eventually would shatter every PC CD-ROM sales record in existence and revolutionize the computer gaming industry.

Myst's 1997 sequel, *Riven*, raised the bar for computer game graphics so high that even six years later, few—if any—competitors have matched its standard of excellence.

Six years later, in 2003, Cyan returned with *Uru: Ages Beyond Myst*, a fully three-dimensional adventure that served not only as the latest chapter in the *Riven* mythos, but also as a bold new experiment in massively multiplayer online gaming.

But to fully appreciate the future of *Uru* and Cyan, we must first look back at its humble beginnings.

IN THE BEGINNING

Cyan cofounder and CEO Rand Miller vividly recalls his first experiences with computers and interactive entertainment. As a junior-high school student in New Mexico, Rand would dig around in the trash cans outside a computer center at the University of New Mexico to find passwords for the time-share user accounts on their teletype machines.

"It was actually a pretty cool computer center for the time," says Rand, though he expresses a tongue-in-cheek fear that his younger days of misappropriating computer access will catch up with him: "They're going to come after me and say, 'Uh, Mr. Miller, we've got a bill here for your time-share usage back in the '70s'."

In the days before the advent of the personal computer, having access to that kind of technology was a major coup, and one that subtly shaped the direction Rand's life would take. "I didn't actually play games as much growing up as make them. I always thought I was a gamer, but really I always made the games, which is odd for me to think back on now, because it's weird that I've been doing this for so long."

So it was only natural that, rather than playing computer games, young Rand would try to create them. One of the first games Rand created had nothing to do with Linking Books, alternative worlds, or solving intricate puzzles. It was much more modest in scope: tic-tac-toe.

"I remember writing this tic-tac-toe game; it was the first game I wrote. I knew about [the programming language] BASIC, and I started to learn programming, just on my own. So I went to the guy who showed me how to log on to the computers and said, 'Okay, I've got PRINT statements and LET statements and GOTO statements; I know all of those. What's the statement where you just tell the computer to make a choice, to make a decision—"okay, now it's your turn to move"?' And he just looked at me and laughed. That was a real epiphany for me—computers are dumb! I thought the whole point was that they could do your homework and stuff."

That wasn't the last programming lesson Rand would have to learn, however. "I started writing the tic-tac-toe game: 'If I move here, you move here, and then if I move here....' All these IF statements—it was a nasty mess of a program, but I wasn't trying to make it readable. And I remember showing it to the guy at the computer center, and he looked at it and went, 'Holy cow, I can't tell what any of this is.' So that was my second epiphany: 'Oh, you should actually try to understand what you're writing there.' "

NOTE

The interviews that these chapters were based upon were conducted in November 2004, prior to the cancellation of *Uru Live*.



Cofounder and CEO of Cyan, Rand Miller is the very heart and soul of the company and its vision.



WE SHOULD DO A CHILDREN'S GAME



Robyn and Rand Miller's early experiments with designing children's games would lead them to create one of the most universally appealing PC games in history.



"The revolutionary thing about *Manhole* was the manhole, and after that... the worlds just got better as we went."

—Rand Miller

Years passed, and the University of New Mexico never caught up with Rand, but he hadn't lost his drive to create games. In 1986, while working at a bank in Texas, Rand wrote a letter to his brother, Robyn, who was living in Seattle at the time, and suggested that they do a children's game. "The Mac had just come out, and I said, 'We can do this. There aren't any good children's games; they're all just junk.' [The industry mentality was that] if you can't make a real game on a computer, you end up making a children's game. And they were just pitiful."

One of Rand's key inspirations was a Macintosh program by the name of HyperCard. Using HyperCard, a programmer could design a series of images ("cards"); by clicking different areas of each card, the user could see different cards. It was in many ways the precursor to Web browser technology, where clicking a link on a page takes you to another page. Although HyperCard was never intended to be used for making games, Rand had a gift for seeing an alternative use for the technology.

"My idea was to have these books on the screen that you could interact with, that you could go into and make things move. It actually took a few letters before Robyn did it, and when he finally said 'okay,' he started drawing the first picture. It was a picture of a manhole and a fire hydrant in the background in the middle of the street. And you could click on the manhole cover, and it slid away and a vine grew out of it.

"Well, the interesting thing about it was, instead of then wanting to continue with that and turn the page ... once the cover slides off and a vine grows up, now I want to see what's in the manhole, I want to see what's up the vine, and I want to know more about this place. And so we never turned the page. It just became a whole world instead of a book. And then everything we've done since then has just kind of evolved from that.... The revolutionary thing was the manhole, and after that, they just kind of evolved. The worlds just got better as we went."

Rand and Robyn sent floppy disks back and forth to each other during the development of *Manhole*. Robyn would draw the game images and produce the raw materials for the game, save the files to floppy disks, and then send the disks to Rand, who would take the assets, put them together, and program the game. Rand would then send the latest build of the game to Robyn, who would then be able to play through it. And so the process continued throughout the game's six-month development.

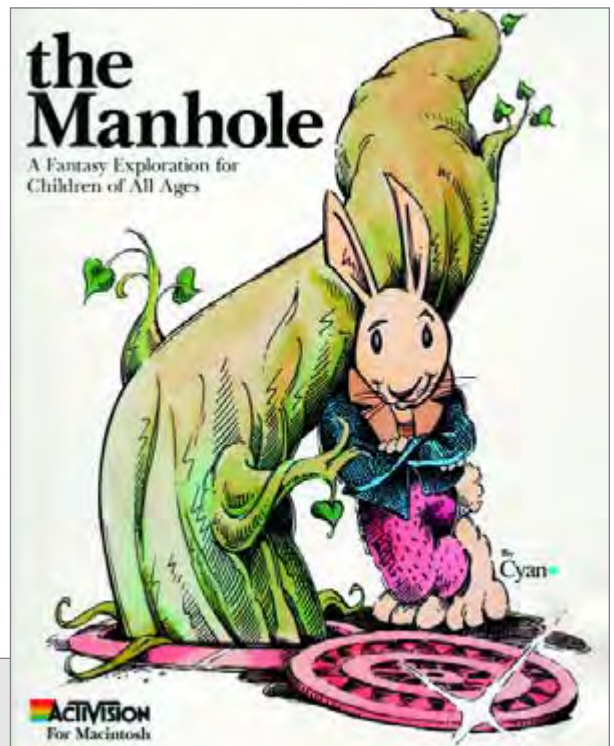


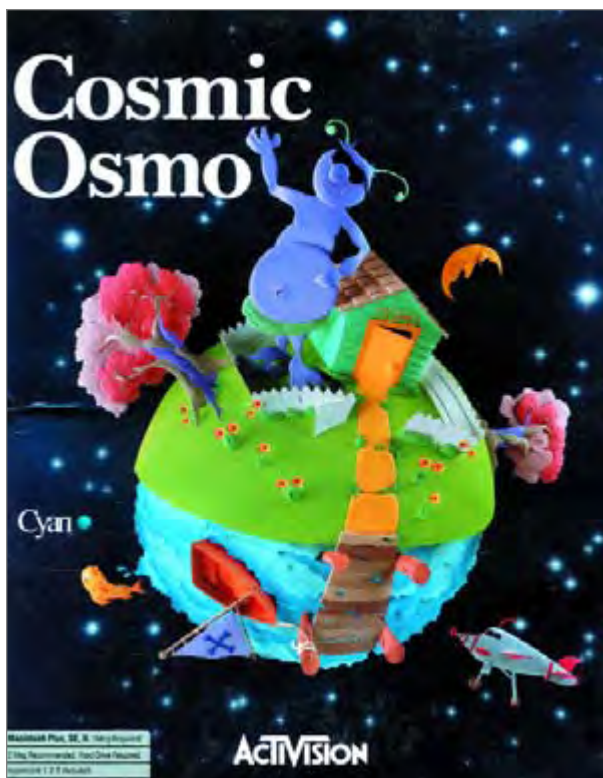
A thousand miles of distance didn't stop Rand and Robyn Miller from creating *Manhole*.

Upon *Manhole's* completion, the brothers formed Prologue, their first game development company, and they self-published the game, which filled five floppy diskettes. In the age before video game publishers, the Miller brothers were forced to market and sell their game on their own. Rand remembers one such experience at a trade show in Texas, where everything from Ginsu knives to car chamois cloths were being sold: "We took our diskettes and we sold out at this show. We had both worked for six months on this. I'm sure we put tons of money into this, but we sold two hundred copies, and we were like, 'Woo-hoo, we're rich!' [We made] probably a thousand bucks for a year's worth of man labor!"

News of *Manhole* spread quickly, and the video game publisher Activision offered \$20,000 to the Miller brothers for the rights to publish *Manhole*. Technically, the money was an advance against royalties from the sales of *Manhole*, but Rand and Robyn were just thrilled to earn something approximating a decent living from designing games. "We didn't know what all of that meant," says Rand. "An advance against royalties? That's \$20,000!" They renamed their development company Cyan and signed on with Activision.

With the publication of *Manhole* by Activision, the Miller brothers were officially in the PC game business.





MOVING TO SPOKANE

Rand and Robyn embarked on another long-distance collaboration on another HyperCard children's game, *Cosmic Osmo*, before deciding that they were tired of shipping diskettes back and forth. Activision requested that Rand and Robyn make a CD-ROM version of *Cosmic Osmo* and gave them an advance against royalties for the new version of the game. "It was at that point that we decided we could quit our real jobs and do this," says Rand.

In 1989, they relocated to Spokane, where their parents lived. "There were a few other places we considered," says Rand, "but in the end, I didn't want to move to Seattle—it was too big—and neither one of us really wanted Texas. It's ... a different place." Working out of their homes, the brothers finished the CD-ROM version of *Osmo* in Spokane.

Cosmic Osmo was Rand and Robyn's last long-distance collaboration. They quit their "real jobs" and moved to Spokane shortly after *Osmo*'s completion.



A founding member of the Cyan *Myst* team, Chris Brandkamp has done it all, from sound design to financial management.

It was around this time that Chris Brandkamp, a friend who they met through their parents' church, entered the picture. A musician with a background in business, Chris's first job with Cyan was to work on the *Cosmic Osmo* instruction manual, although he would later become the company's financial officer and business manager.

After completing the CD-ROM version of *Osmo*, the Miller brothers turned their attention toward an educational game called *Spelunx*. Like *Manhole* and *Cosmic Osmo* before it (and *Myst* and *Riven* after it), *Spelunx* was another HyperCard-programmed game.

But before development on *Spelunx* got underway, Rand and Robyn learned some harsh lessons about the nature of game development's business side. "We had a small problem with the publisher going bankrupt shortly after *Osmo*," says Rand. "There's a whole evil story of court battles and attorneys who run software companies.

"We'd switched publishers for *Spelunx*, and we found out that Sunsoft, the Japanese company that had been publishing our children's games in Japan, had been interested in contacting us for more than a year, and [our former publisher] wouldn't give them our name. They refused to tell them anything about us or where we were or give them our phone number or anything. Robyn and I had been toying with the idea of a game for an older audience for a while, and it wasn't until after [the publisher's bankruptcy] that Sunsoft said, 'We'd like to do a game for an older audience.' And we said, 'Where have you been? Let's go.' And that was where *Myst* came from."



Myst was the gaming world's first blockbuster PC CD-ROM adventure and a watershed moment in video game history.

MYST

Chris Brandkamp's earliest memories of *Myst* involve helping Rand build a prefabricated shed. "We put an entire shed kit, one of these big do-it-yourself sheds, in the back of my Dodge Caravan. I couldn't believe that, number one, we did it, and, two, that we were able to steer. And then going up to Rand's house—there was this steep driveway, and I thought for sure the thing was going to tip over. But it worked! We were out working on the shed at Rand's house, waiting for the Sunsoft proposal, and it came in later that day."

Part of Cyan's *Myst* proposal to Sunsoft included a budget to double the size of their staff from two to four. After getting the OK from Sunsoft, Rand and Robyn hired Chris to create the sound effects for the game, and a fellow by the name of Chuck Carter to work with Robyn on designing *Myst*'s striking visuals.



Chuck Carter worked with Robyn Miller to design *Myst*'s striking visuals.



As a musician and a close friend of Rand Miller's, Chris Brandkamp was drafted to create all of *Myst*'s sound effects.



The youngest Miller brother, Ryan, began working for Cyan in high school, ferrying materials back and forth between team members in the pre-Internet age.



Robyn Miller proudly displays the first *Myst* development team sweatshirt.

To this day, Chris isn't completely sure how he got involved with Cyan. "I don't even know how it all happened. We were just friends that had varied backgrounds. Mine was more on the business side of things, although, because I was a musician, they asked me if I wanted to do sound effects. 'You're a musician, you can do sound effects!' So I ended up doing that with *Myst*." (And don't bring up the fact that he was the guy in the *Making of Myst* video who was filmed blowing bubbles in the toilet. He's still touchy about that!)

The concept behind *Myst* was strikingly original. The entire game was a first-person, point-and-click adventure rendered in 3D graphics that were, for the time, absolutely stunning. In *Myst*, you start out alone on a mysterious uninhabited island with no instructions, no goal, and no idea of what you're supposed to be doing there.

Myst, like *Manhole* and Cyan's other projects, harnessed players' natural curiosity to encourage them to poke around on the island and uncover its secrets. Along the way, players would unearth a family tragedy of treachery and deception and discover the miracle of Linking Books—specially written tomes that could transport the user across vast expanses of space and time.

But before any of that was to come about, the *Myst* team had a lot of work ahead.

"WE WERE ALL IN OUR BASEMENTS"

The initial *Myst* team consisted of Rand, Robyn, Chris, and Chuck "working out of our houses and not sleeping at all," according to Chris. "We were all in our basements," says Rand.

The closest thing they had to a studio setup was in Chris's unfinished basement, which also doubled as a small warehouse of sorts for the *Manhole*, *Cosmic Osmo*, and *Spelunx* inventory. "Man, it was cold down there," remembers Chris.

Because the four-man team was working from four different locations in the pre-Internet age, they hired the youngest Miller brother, Ryan, to drive materials back and forth to each other and to the local Kinko's. To stay in communication with the team members, Ryan carried around a cell phone pack that was "about the size of an unabridged dictionary," according to Chris.

Interview Excerpt: "We're Talking like a Bunch of Old Farts"

CHRIS: Remember when we got the optical drive? That was just ... we thought we hit paydirt. It was just amazing. It would hold—how much would that thing hold? Thirty megs? Three megs? Some number that was tiny. It was like a fraction of what people's RAM is now. We're talking like a bunch of old farts. "Do you remember when...?"

RYAN: I feel like we're filming *A Mighty Wind* or something.

CHRIS: (pretending to use a walker) "Rand, it's so good to see you!"

RAND: (in an old-man voice) "Remember that first computer? 2K of RAM. 2K of RAM. That was awesome."

Ryan's cell phone wasn't the only technology that was comically ancient in retrospect. Chris used a Macintosh SE-30 and a program called Sound Designer to create all of the intricate sound effects for *Myst*. "I don't know how big the hard drive was," he says, "but, man, it was so slow. All I had were two channels. So I'd lay one down, and I'd lay down another one, and I'd mix them together into one channel, which would free up the other one."

Unfortunately, that meant that Chris couldn't go back and change the channels after he'd mixed them down into a single channel. "Then Robyn would say, 'Can you change that one just a little bit?' No! No! No! I had to save all of these iterations [of the files], so I could at least go back somewhere and start over. It was just nuts."

As the game began to take shape, Ryan eventually was relieved of some lackey duties and was asked to write the journals found in *Myst*. "That was pretty cool," he says, "especially being in high school. That was a neat opportunity. Looking back, I don't even know how they could let me do it, but who thought *Myst* would be that big?"



By Rand's reckoning, as many as 30 million gamers might have visited *Myst*'s Channelwood Age.

MYST BECOMES THAT BIG

Myst was published in North America by Broderbund Software in 1993. No one could have predicted its success, not even the game's creators. "You have to consider the history of what the CD-ROM gaming industry was prior to that," says Chris. "At the time, most games, they'd really only sell about 10,000 copies. And we just didn't know if we would sell that many. It was an unknown. There was no market then. It was a pretty scary venture at that point and completely unpredictable."

Rand allowed himself some slightly more optimistic fantasies: "I remember dreaming with Robyn, 'Think if we sold 100,000 copies. Oh my gosh, that would be incredible!'"

Myst succeeded far beyond its creators' wildest dreams. To date, *Myst* has sold nearly 10 million copies. It was the best-selling PC CD-ROM game of all time (only Maxis's *The Sims* has ever rivaled it in sales). And its strong sales weren't just a fluke; in December of 1996, three years after release, *Myst* broke the industry record for most copies of a CD-ROM game sold in a single month.

Obviously, the unimaginable success of *Myst* had wide-reaching effects on the entire PC game market. At its most fundamental level, it drove the sales of PCs and CD-ROM drives. "We fielded numerous calls from people saying, 'You know, your game is selling our hardware,'" says Chris.

Myst also had an unpredictable effect on PC game development. "Every time a new game came out, it was always compared to *Myst*," says Chris. "It was difficult to see some of the other developer friends that we had being measured up [against us] when they were making something that was not even intended to be a *Myst* rival."

And, according to Chris, *Myst* also opened many developers' eyes to the potential of 3D gaming. "[About] the software that we were using at the time, Strata Studio Pro, these people were saying, 'This wasn't designed to make worlds, this was designed to make marketing things here and there.' And so the working relationship we had with them not only changed their industry, but it also changed the gaming industry as a whole, because I think it opened a lot of people's eyes to what they could do in a 3D environment."



Myst also changed the way PC games were marketed and sold. “I think the main thing that it did was make people realize that there’s 10 million people out there who will play a computer game,” says Rand. “Actually more, because three people were playing each purchased version, so somewhere out there are 30 million; it’s not some niche market. Even now, somehow this industry’s still satisfied if you sell half a million; that’s a pretty good seller. Well, wait a minute, there’s 30 million people out there who will play computer games if you give them something they want. *Myst* proved that and opened that up, and *The Sims* is another one that proved it as well. There is a huge market out there. It’s funny that it just hasn’t been addressed.”

One of the reasons that *Myst* had attracted so many more gamers than any previous PC game was that it had more female players than any previous PC game. “I think up to that point, the gaming market was really a total guy-nerd market,” says Chris. “And what surprised us, because we didn’t necessarily design it for women, was that half the people who bought *Myst* were women, because it wasn’t a product that required lots of time behind the control stick or whatever; it wasn’t a ‘twitch’ game. So we sort of sat back and watched a lot of things change in the industry.”

NEW FACES

During the development of *Myst* and before work began on its sequel, *Riven*, two key Cyan employees were added to the staff.

The first was Richard Watson, known to his friends as “RAWA” and to diehard *Uru* aficionados as “Doctor” Richard Watson of the D’ni Restoration Council, a prominent voice on Cyan’s official *Uru* message boards.

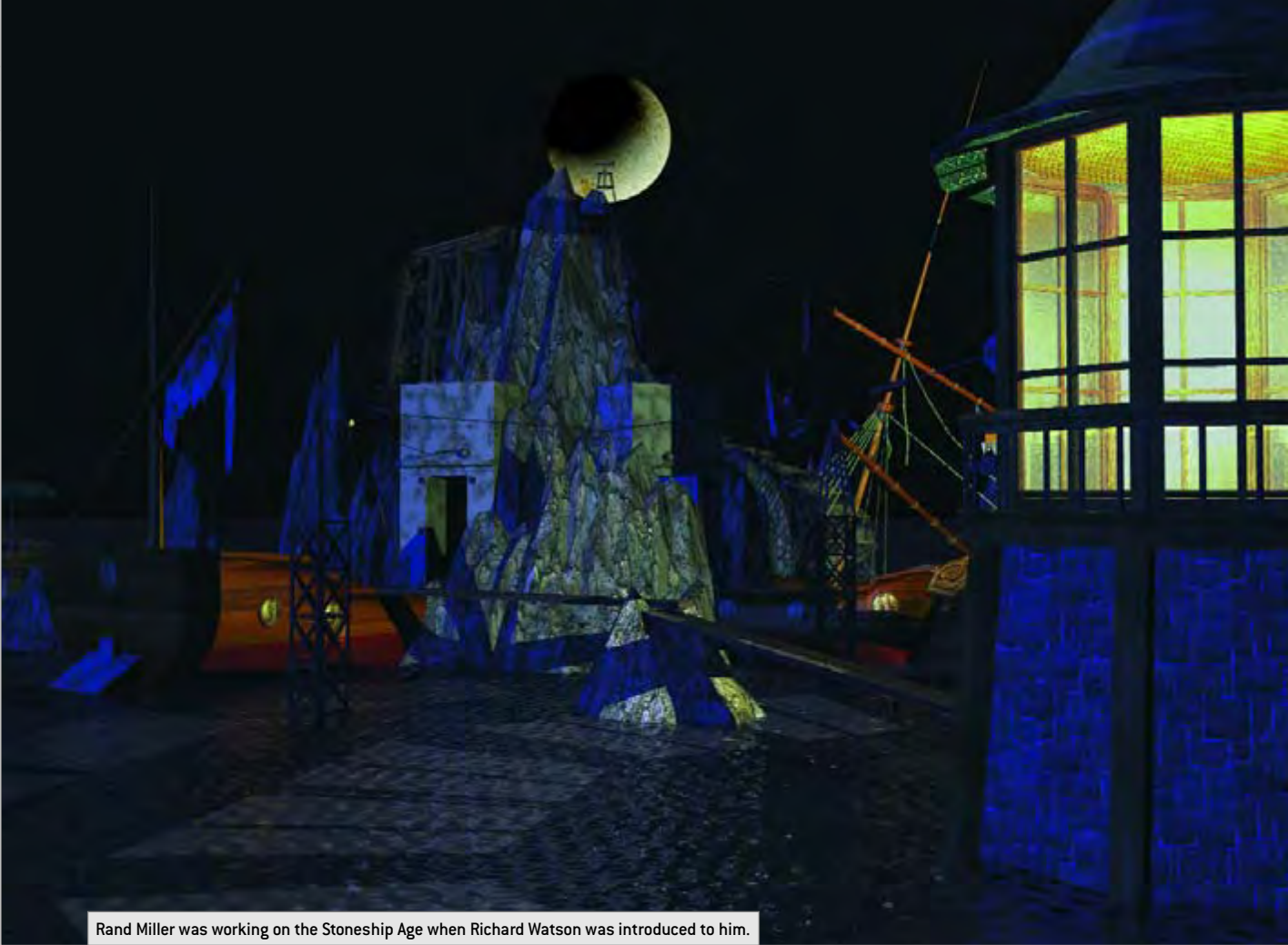
Prior to joining Cyan in September of 1992, Rich was working at a book bindery, “which turned out to be kind of appropriate,” he says, given the importance of Linking Books in the *Myst* series. “[The bindery] offered to hire me full time, but what I really wanted to do was game programming or computer programming on any level. I had some friends who knew Rand but didn’t know what he did; they just knew he worked with computers. They offered to introduce me to him, so I basically told the book bindery that before I accepted a full-time position there, I had something else that I had to check and see if it would work out. And I didn’t know that he made games; I didn’t know anything. I just came to meet Rand and see if he had something in computers that I could do.

“So that was in August of ’92. I went to his house, and he was working on [the] Stoneship Age [from *Myst*]; he was working on the animation for the spigot for the chest that’s down at the bottom of the lighthouse.

“I’d never seen anything like that before. I had an old Apple, and most of the games were either text or, well, nothing like the *Myst* graphics were. I kind of begged him for a job after that.” He got one, working on the *Myst* HyperCard programming, as well as the HyperCard programming for a colorized update of *Cosmic Osmo*.



Appropriately enough, Rich “RAWA” Watson worked in a book bindery before joining the *Myst* team as a HyperCard programmer.



Rand Miller was working on the Stoneship Age when Richard Watson was introduced to him.

Interview Excerpt: The (Un)Comfy Chair

CHRIS: I wish we still had your [Rand's] chair. Because that chair...

RAND: What chair?

RYAN: The one Rich slept in?

CHRIS: No, not the one Rich slept in. It was your "executive" chair. It was so bad. You know, you talk about just living on a tight budget. We just said, "Rand, buy a chair." "No, no, this is good enough." And it listed to starboard so bad! "No, no, it's okay."

RYAN: And that's why Rand has back problems to this day.

CHRIS: He would type like this (leans at a 45-degree angle). And I remember going up there one day, up to his house, and he finally bought a chair. And he just chucked this thing, so there was this really toasted leather chair just sitting in his front yard. But the chair reminded me of Rich because ... I don't know if you [Rich] ended up with that chair.

RICH: Yup
(laughter)

CHRIS: I knew there was some connection there.

RAND: That's why RAWA has back problems to this day too. It destroyed more programmers....



Josh Staub joined Cyan full time for *Riven* and is the company's longest-serving visual designer.

The other new face at Cyan was a young 3D artist by the name of Joshua Staub, who joined up in 1993 just as the development of *Myst* was wrapping up.

Josh had known Ryan Miller since he was eleven years old and had met Robyn a couple of years later. Although the Miller brothers weren't into game design when Josh first met them, Robyn was already starting to experiment with basic HyperCard programming and graphic design. "I was enamored by what he was doing," says Josh. "I'd always been into art but never serious about it. It was kind of a hobby for me in school, and in fact I never thought that I would ever end up where I am now. I started doing stuff on my own when I was 15 or 16, doing a lot of work for companies in the [San Francisco] Bay Area where I grew up."

Josh saved his money to buy a new computer, the Macintosh LC3. The LC3 was distinguished by the fact that it had an FPU (Floating Point Unit), which allowed for the creation of 3D images. And Josh had good reason to start exploring 3D design: "Robyn and Rand and Chris Brandkamp had flown down to California for some reason, and they brought a hard drive, and they came to my house to show me these images [from *Myst*] of the fountain, and the library in the distance, and the dock.

"I remember when I saw them, I just thought ... I'd always been driven to create things that looked real, and this seemed like the ticket. This was the way to get there, even though, looking back on it now, the images aren't photorealistic, but it definitely seemed like it was possible."



Seeing glimpses of *Myst*'s fountain and library awakened Josh's desire to become a 3D artist.

Having been inspired by Cyan's early *Myst* images, Josh, then a freshman in high school, wasted no time in getting started on some 3D modeling of his own. "I got Strata Vision, and I called Adobe and said, 'I have no money, and I really want to do this stuff.' I remember coming home from school one day and walking up to my front porch, and there was a Photoshop box on my front porch, with a complete version just for free. They just sent it to me and I thought it was so awesome. I just dove in."

During his high school years, Josh worked on some 3D projects of his own to teach himself how to model 3D images. Between his senior year in high school and his first year at the University of Washington, Josh came up to Spokane to work with Cyan on the colorized update of *Spelunx*. "I lived in Robyn's basement," he says, "and we just worked around the clock, and in two weeks basically created the color version" (which involved redrawing every single game image and coloring all of them in Photoshop).

The Miller brothers weren't about to let someone with Josh's talents and work ethic get away. "It was at that point that Robyn and Rand started giving me job offers, like, 'You can't go to school, you've got to come work here!'" Josh says. "And at the time that just seemed crazy. This was a fun thing to do to make a little money in the summer. Cyan didn't have much money; *Myst* was just being released that fall."

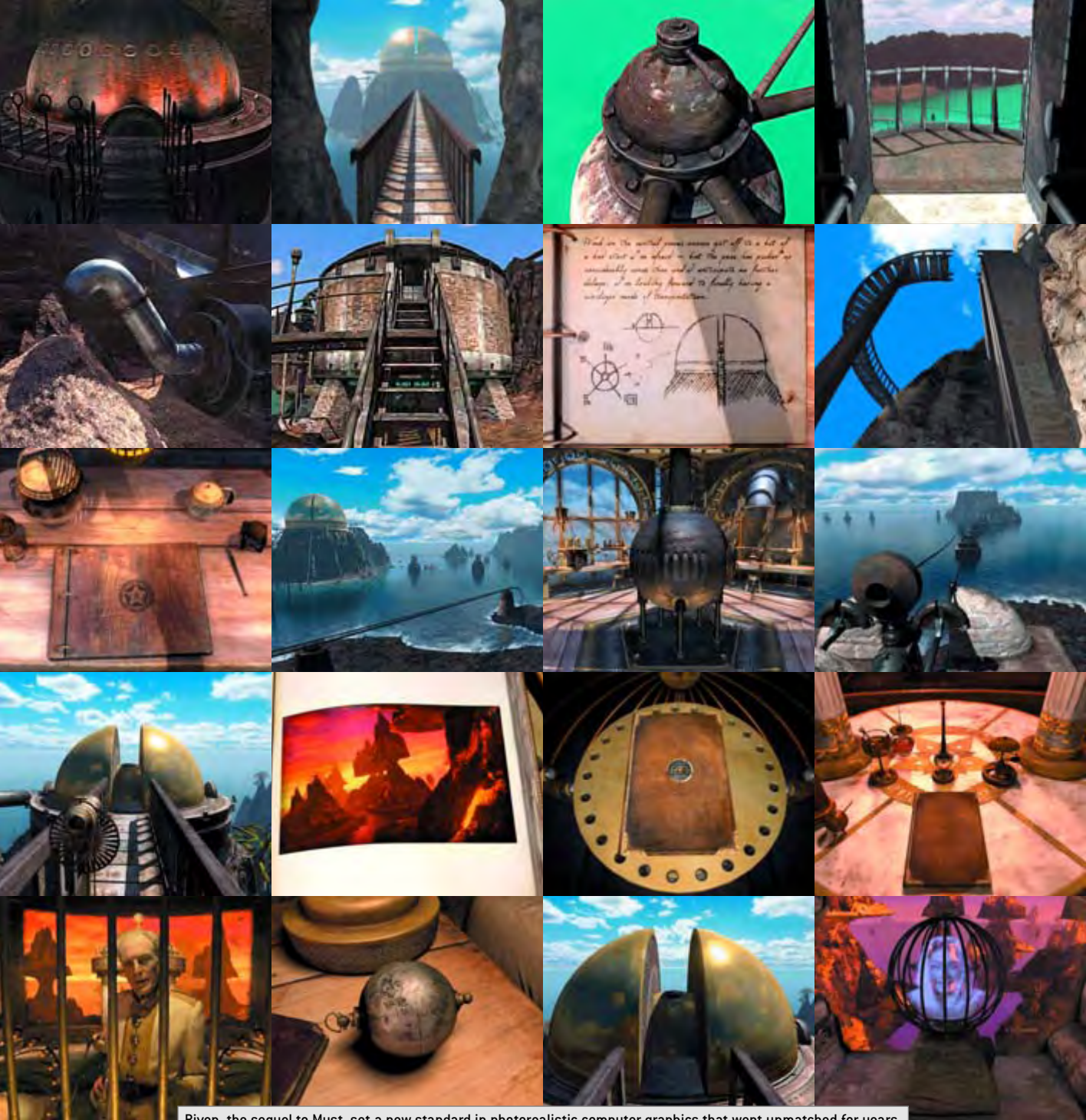
Cyan kept extending job offers to Josh, however. At the time, there were only six people working at Cyan: Rand, Robyn, and Ryan Miller, Chris Brandkamp, Rich Watson, and Chuck Carter. As *Myst* garnered more and more critical and financial success, coming to work for Cyan "seemed like a more viable option," says Josh. "Finally I received an offer that I couldn't refuse and made the move. Robyn said, 'We're going to make the sequel, we're going to make another *Myst*,' so I decided to take the chance. I guess the rest is history."



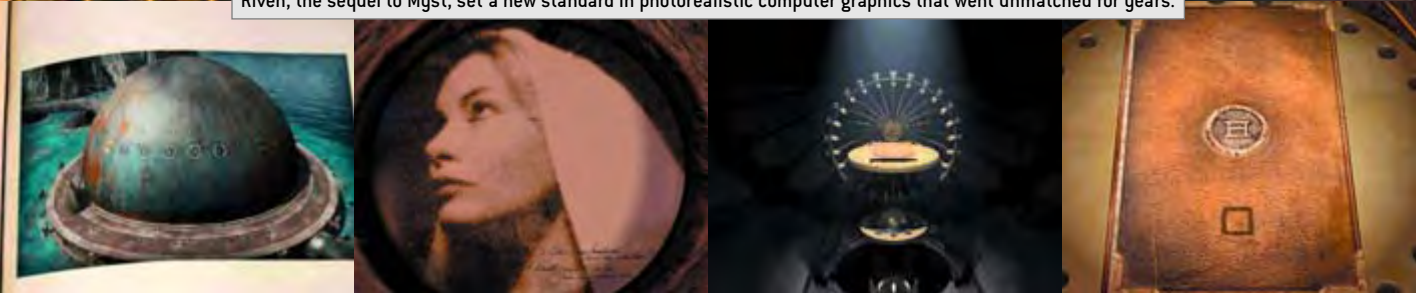
Before Josh came to work full time for Cyan on *Riven*, he spent a summer helping Robyn Miller put together a color version of *Spelunx*.



The *Myst* team. Front row, left to right: Richard "RAWA" Watson, Bonnie McDowall (now Staub), Chuck Carter. Back row: Chris Brandkamp, Robyn Miller, Rand Miller, Ryan Miller.



Riven, the sequel to Myst, set a new standard in photorealistic computer graphics that went unmatched for years.



RIVEN

At the end of *Myst*, Atrus, the principal character of the *Myst* mythos, looks up from a Linking Book that he's writing and thanks the player for playing. With such an ambiguous ending, there was no doubt in anyone's mind that there would be a sequel. In fact, Rand and Robyn had bigger plans for *Myst*'s story, but they quickly realized that all their ideas wouldn't fit into one game.

Like J.R.R. Tolkien's *The Hobbit*, *Myst* was just a precursor to what would become one of the most expansive and ambitious games to date. And like Tolkien's *The Lord of the Rings*, it was going to take some time and effort to produce.

"WE THOUGHT WE WERE GOING TO MAKE THE WHOLE GAME OURSELVES!"

One of Cyan's first *Riven*-related goals was to find and acquire the best 3D-modeling hardware and software available, a task that fell to Josh Staub and Robyn Miller. "We researched Silicon Graphics workstations, and Alias and SoftImage and Wavefront and all the different packages out there," says Josh. "We bought two SGIs (Silicon Graphics Indigo workstations) and two copies of SoftImage, and Robyn and I thought we were just going to make the whole game ourselves!"



The Silicon Graphics Indigo workstations: State of the art in 1996, world's most expensive doorstops in 2004.

Interview Excerpt: "Wish I Had That Money Back"

RAND: With *Riven*, we were spoiled. I mean, we were funding it all ourselves, we were using all of our *Myst* money to do whatever we want, so we buy these huge SGIs....

CHRIS: SGIs. SoftImage.

RAND: Which was insane.

CHRIS: \$50,000 bucks a whack.

RAND: That was for the workstation, and it was another \$40,000 for the software.

CHRIS: It was insane, just writing these checks out.

RAND: Wish I had that money back.

(laughter)

CHRIS: We've got a really great doorstop downstairs, you need to see it. Two of 'em, SGI servers.



The Millers recruited Disney and ILM artist Richard Vander Wende for *Riven*, the sequel to *Myst*.

Cyan tapped into a new market of young visual artists during the production of *Riven*.

Despite Robyn and Josh's enthusiasm, there was no way that a project the size and scope of *Riven* could be handled by fewer than a dozen programmers and artists. Although Rich Watson was able to handle the vast majority of the HyperCard programming, it quickly became obvious that *Riven* would require a larger team of 3D artists. The first person Rand and Robyn recruited for *Riven* was Richard Vander Wende, an artist who had worked with Disney and Industrial Light and Magic.

Working from the game design created by Rand and Robyn Miller, Josh Staub, and Rich Watson, Richard Vander Wende and Robyn Miller would go on to define *Riven's* unique look and supervise a huge team of artists.

"I think for the first time during the era of developing *Riven*, it was also an awakening of the artists' community from the traditional media into this other medium, where there was suddenly a market for these people in a form that they really had never been exposed to," says Chris. "And I think that a lot of the artists that we had for *Riven* were real high-end graphics artists."

But it was a new breed of artists, not the ones who had found much more profitable work in Hollywood. "In spite of the fact that it was *Myst*, we couldn't afford people from Hollywood, because their salaries were so huge," remembers Rand. "But we had a huge number of other people, people who were just starting out who wanted desperately to work for us. So we kind of got our choice of those people. It was definitely a younger market that we were looking at, but we still felt like we were getting the cream of the crop."



GROWING PAINS

With a quickly growing staff that eventually peaked at 37 employees, the Millers were not going to be able to complete *Riven* in their basements. The first temporary studio was Chris Brandkamp's garage. "We built a garage, and we moved into it, took over the whole thing," says Rand. "We had twelve people in the garage, upstairs and downstairs. That was when our walls were made of Visqueen. We had these incredible SGI workstations, working in a garage with walls made of clear plastic."

As the team expanded, they wound up leasing temporary office space from a vacant Comfort World mattress outlet while ground was being broken on a new office in Mead, Washington, just outside Spokane. "In the middle of making *Riven*, we moved into [the new] building, which was a nice boost," remembers Rand.

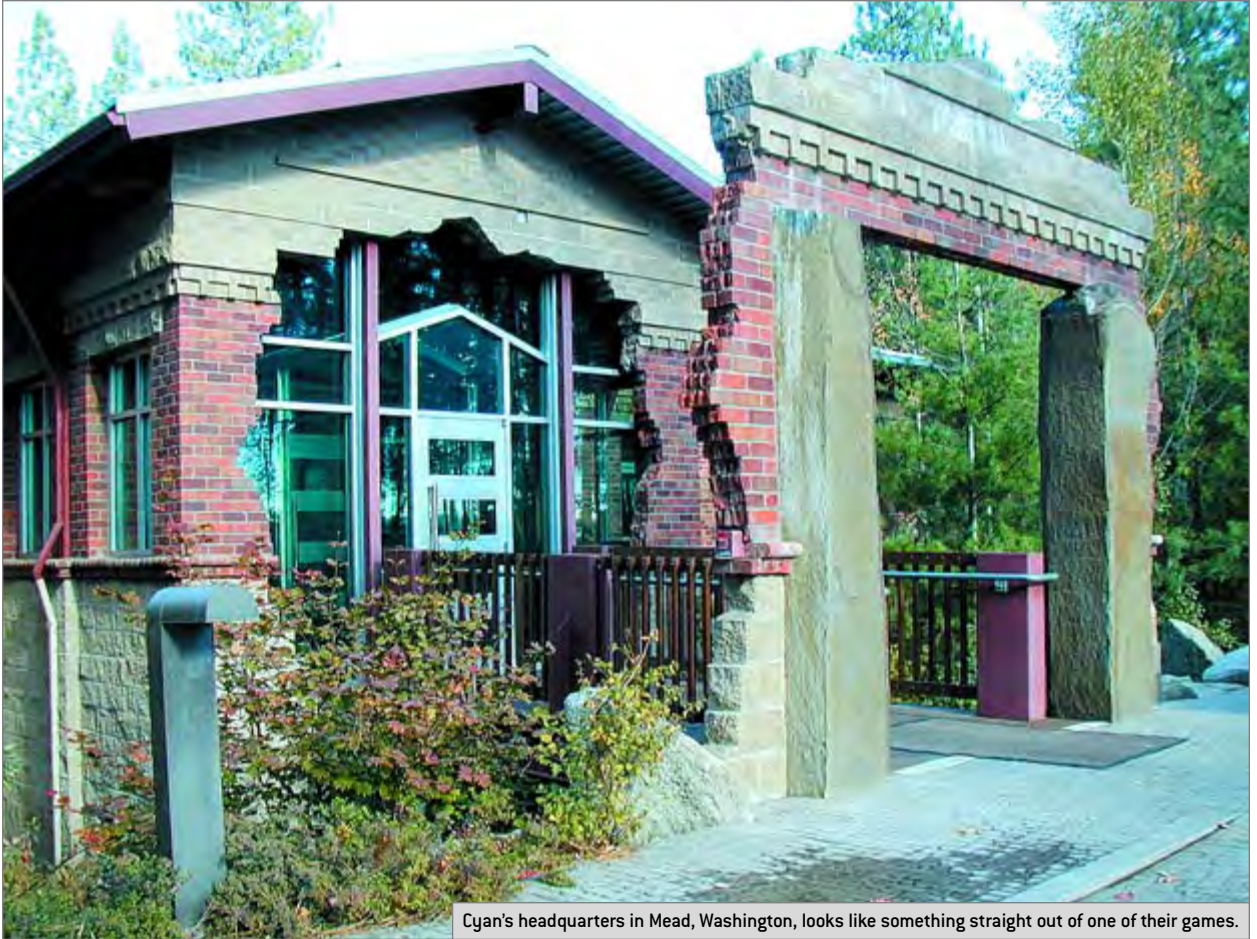


Chris Brandkamp's garage was the first office space that the *Riven* team had to work in.



Cyan leased space from a then-vacant Comfort World mattress outlet in Spokane, Washington, while their new offices were under construction.

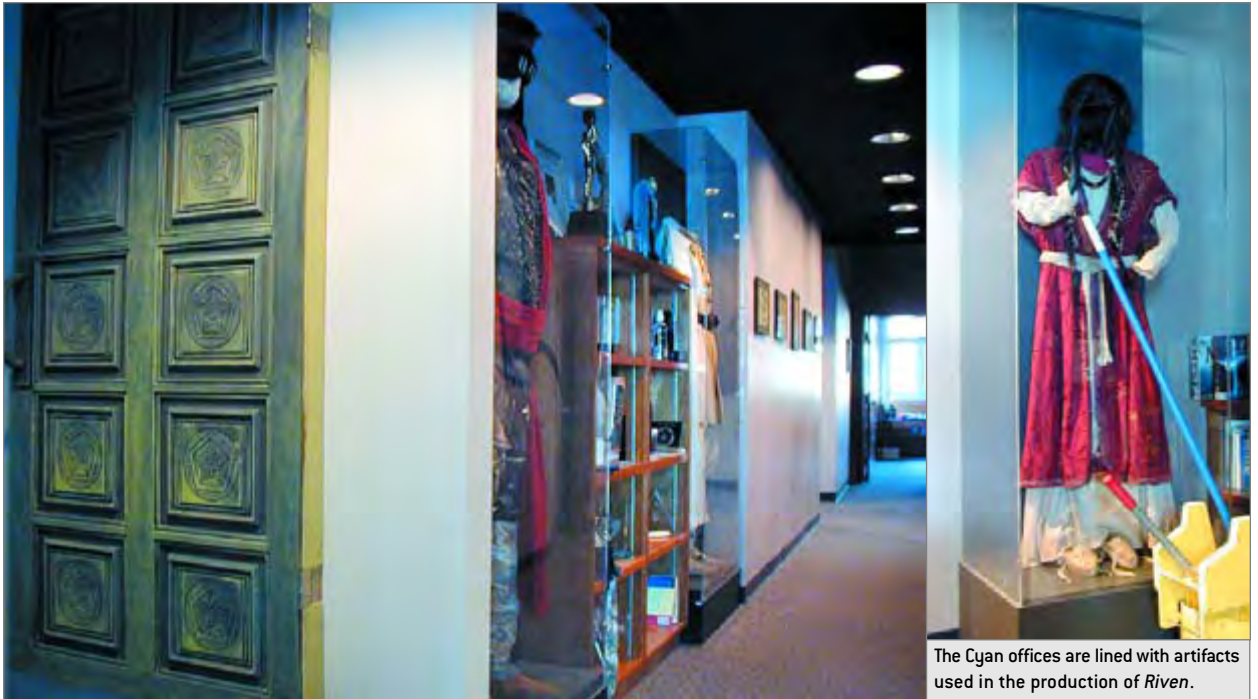




Cyan's headquarters in Mead, Washington, looks like something straight out of one of their games.



Riven was also a test of Cyan's ability to adapt to quick expansion. "We learned a lot about business and hiring people," says Rand. "Because there's no guarantee. You hire somebody, and you honestly don't know ... it's like marriage. Until you live with someone, you don't really know what they're like. Honestly, half the trick of business is just, after you hire somebody, trying to make sure you put them in something that's satisfying for them and productive for you, just taking advantage of something that they can do. Unfortunately, you can't always [do that], but *Riven* was a good exercise in at least learning that."



The Cyan offices are lined with artifacts used in the production of *Riven*.

There may have been a few bumps in the road, but the finished product was, without a doubt, worth the struggle. After four years of development, *Riven* turned out to be everything that *Myst* was, only more. *Myst* was constructed from 2,500 shots; *Riven* required 4,000. *Riven* had five times as much live-action and computer animation as *Myst*; and where *Myst* required only one CD-ROM for the entire game, *Riven* required five.

Cyan had met the challenge of producing a worthy sequel to the biggest PC game of all time. The only question that remained was: where to go from there?



Although *Cosmic Osmo*'s graphics weren't nearly at the level of *Riven*'s photorealism, the same sense of wonder and thrill of exploration runs through all of Cyan's games.

CHAPTER 16



DIRT, MUDPIE, AND URU

DIRT

After completing the exhausting development process of *Riven*, all but a dozen or so of the team members wound up leaving Cyan to pursue other interests. Among those departing were Richard Vander Wende and Robyn Miller. “Robyn kind of left,” remembers Rand. “He wasn’t as interested anymore in the interactive in particular. A lot of people left, and we continued on with a core group. We wanted to do something very different. It was actually then that we started working on *Uru*; right after *Riven* was when the work began.”

D’NI, OVER COFFEE

Riven shipped on October 31, 1997, and it wasn’t long after its release that Rand started thinking about the next project, which would eventually be known as *Uru*. Josh Staub vividly remembers the first time Rand told him what he was considering: “We had just released *Riven*, and Rand and I were on a press tour in Europe. I remember clearly having coffee in a coffee shop one morning. We hadn’t talked about what we were going to do in the future or anything, and he just said, ‘Okay, I want to tell you now what I would like to do, and I want to know what you think.’ And he said he wanted to make the next product a real-time game, in real-time 3D, and he wanted to take the fans to D’ni”—an ancient underground city hidden in a cavern deep under the New Mexico desert.



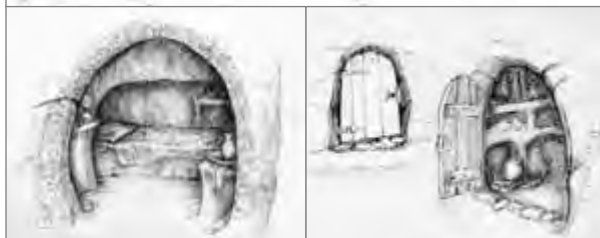
Rand Miller's post-*Riven* vision included bringing *Myst* fans down to the legendary city of D'ni.



Early concept art of the desert Cleft, where *Uru* begins. The Cleft figures prominently into the *Myst* mythos [art by Victoria Brace].

“D’ni” (pronounced *DUN-nee*) referred not only to the city, but also to the name of the all-but-extinct race of people who had occupied the city for 10,000 years. It was the D’ni who had invented the Art of writing Linking Books that could transport the user to other worlds and Ages.

Every character featured in *Myst* and *Riven* was either D’ni or an inhabitant of an Age to which the D’ni had linked. The D’ni and their city featured prominently in the three *Myst* novels that had been written and published during the development of *Myst* and *Riven*. In a series of games and novels that focused as much on place and environment as they did on the characters inhabiting them, D’ni was in many ways the heart and soul of the *Myst* mythos.



A variety of concept sketches for the look and feel of the Cleft interior, which didn’t change much during *Uru*’s development.

GIVING D'NI ITS DUE

Obviously, the concept of journeying to D'ni itself held a lot of appeal for the legions of *Myst* fans who had already devoured *Riven*, but it wasn't the story concept that intimidated Josh—it was the fact that Rand wanted the game to be a fully three-dimensional, real-time experience. Instead of having the player click on static images to progress around the game's Ages, Rand wanted the player to actually be able to explore and interact with every miniscule facet of the environments from any angle they wished.

From a technical standpoint, it seemed almost impossible to do justice to *Myst* and *Riven*'s lavish graphical style in a 3D real-time game. “At the time,” says Josh, “the only 3D games that were out there were *Doom* and *Tomb Raider*—really blocky endless hallways of just running around shooting things. They weren't up to the level, visually, that we were used to. I think that we'd built this fan base that really respected the stuff that we did visually, and it felt like we were going to be taking a dramatic step backward, that we wouldn't be able to give D'ni its due.”



D'NI IN REAL TIME

Rand's earliest conception of *Uru* was code named “DIRT,” which stood for “D'ni In Real Time.” The core Cyan team took their first steps toward D'ni in 1998. “What we wanted was to get to D'ni in a different timeframe, to get away from the sequel mentality,” says Rand. Although it wasn't explicitly stated in the games, the events of *Myst* and *Riven* took place approximately 200 years ago, shortly after the fall of the D'ni civilization. Rand wanted to set DIRT in the present day, to make it more of a “spin-off” from *Myst* and *Riven* than a direct sequel.

Even though DIRT was being positioned to avoid direct comparisons with *Riven*, the Cyan team was still concerned about the enormous technical challenges ahead of it, especially because none of them had ever worked on a 3D real-time game. “It wasn't that I really wanted to do another intensely complicated prerendered game,” says Josh. “That was enough to drive anyone crazy. But, you know, it scared me.” It wasn't until Josh and the DIRT team saw Headspin Technologies' game engine at 1998's Electronic Entertainment Expo that they started to see how DIRT could live up to the rest of the *Myst* franchise.

It's 1997, and you're a Cyan artist who's just been told that you have to find a way to bring players to D'ni in a real-time 3D game. Welcome to Josh Staub's world [art by Robert Grace].



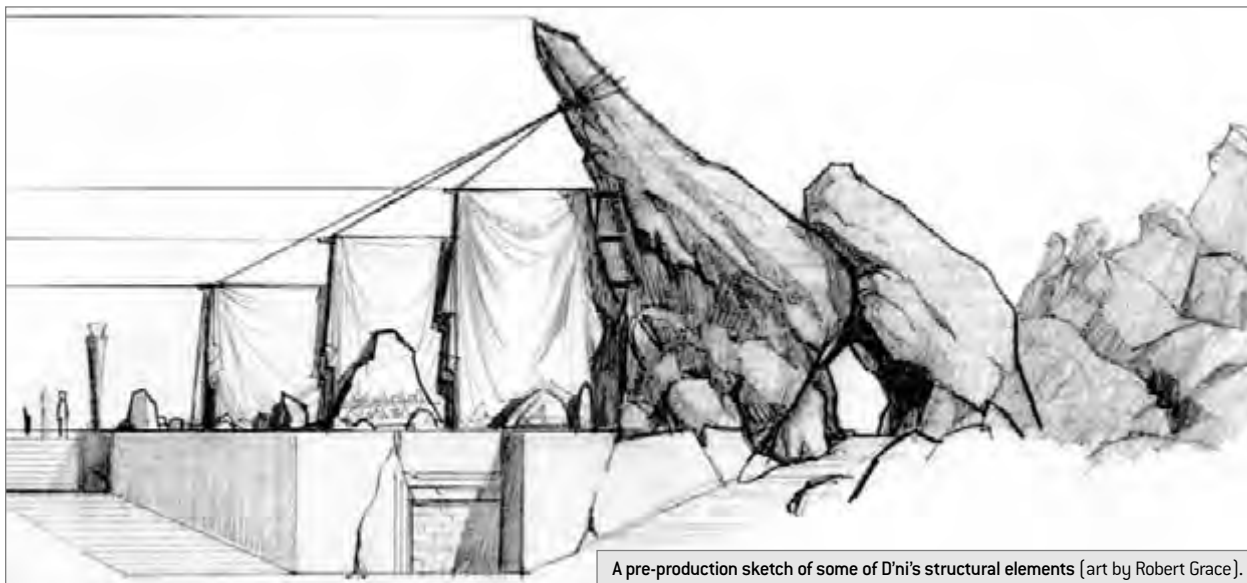
Brice Tebbs was the founder of Headspin Technologies, who created the Plasma 3D game engine that made *Uru* possible.

HEADSPIN

Headspin Technologies was founded in North Carolina by Brice Tebbs in 1998. “We were building some 3D technology and sort of shopping it around,” says Brice, “and we heard a rumor that Cyan was going to be moving into 3D game design. Our engine was loosely described as ‘*Myst* meets *Mario 64*.’ We were trying to take the visual realism and exploration theme of *Myst* and update it with real-time 3D. So we thought, ‘Well, heck, these guys *are* the *Myst* people, so maybe we should talk to them,’ and it turned out that, gee, that’s what Rand wanted to do.”

The Cyan crew had some lengthy discussions with Headspin, followed by a visit to North Carolina by Rand and Tony Fryman, who was hired during the development of *Riven* to schedule and facilitate Cyan’s day-to-day operations. Brice was pleasantly surprised to see how easy Cyan was to deal with, despite the fact that “they are the company who shipped 10 million units, and we’re just these dudes,” he laughs.

“I’d been a big fan of the *Myst* and *Riven* series beforehand,” Brice says. “I remember when Tony [Fryman] called and said, ‘Rand and I will come visit.’ They showed up, and within five minutes, we just sat down and talked about what we wanted to do, and we hit it off really well. I can’t even remember whether we ever actually did sign a contract. It was just like that; we just worked and did things that way.”



A pre-production sketch of some of D’ni’s structural elements (art by Robert Grace).

Josh Staub, as the head of an art department that had shrunk to only two people, was particularly relieved to partner with Brice and Headspin. “The work that Headspin was doing was very simple and primitive,” says Josh, “but you could tell, just from the demo that they put together, that they cared about things like lighting, and they cared about things like shadows and shading. We could tell that they had certain sensibilities that we shared, and we knew that we were going to have to have these things in this next game.”

DIRT GETS OFF THE GROUND

Now that Cyan had an idea of the programming tools that they would use for DIRT, they were able to begin what would become an exhaustive battery of tests of the capabilities of Headspin's 3D game engine, known as "Plasma."

"We got our hands on [Discreet's] 3D Studio Max and started learning that," says Josh, referring to the program used to model DIRT's three-dimensional environments. "Honestly, coming from SoftImage [used to model *Riven*], it was a lot less complicated. But I was totally, completely ignorant of the real-time technology at that point, and I knew I just needed to jump in and start trying to make stuff."



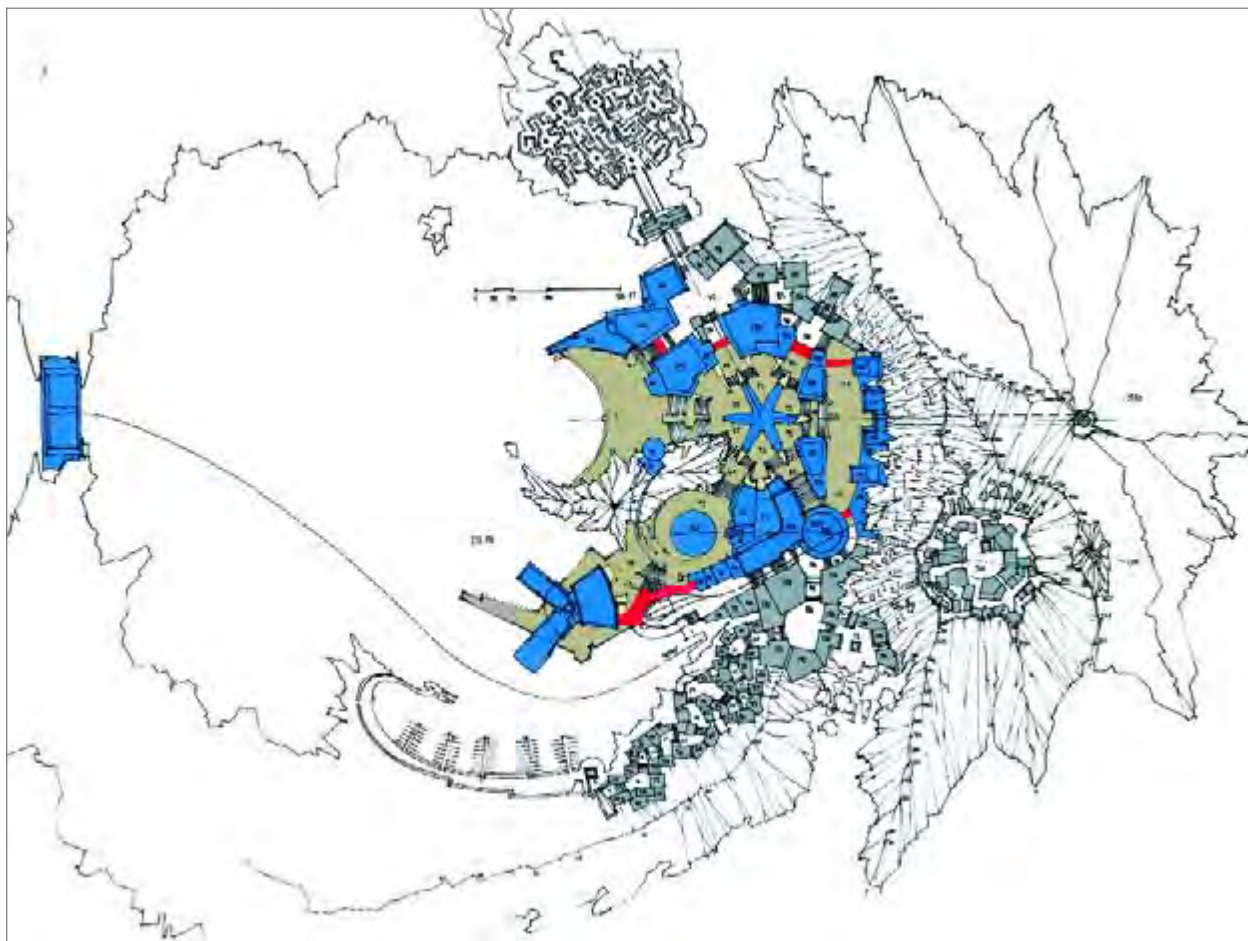
This was one of the first environments created for *Uru* using 3D Studio Max and running in real time on Headspin Technologies' Plasma game engine in 1998.



Not only was the use of 3D Studio Max a new experience for Josh and his team, but they still had to learn the strengths and limits of Headspin's constantly evolving Plasma game engine, which underwent significant changes throughout its development.

"We had one version of [Plasma] that we, for the most part, scrapped entirely," says Chris Brandkamp. "What we realized, I think about a year or so into development, was that there were just too many new features needed within the engine that weren't there. [We had to ask ourselves], Do we fix the old one or just start over?"

It was also a challenge for Headspin to learn exactly what Cyan wanted from the Plasma engine. "We did a lot of tests," says Brice. "And a lot of [Cyan's] concern was, 'Can we make stuff in realtime that looks good enough to make this happen?' There were a lot of early tests, and some of those still hold up pretty well today."

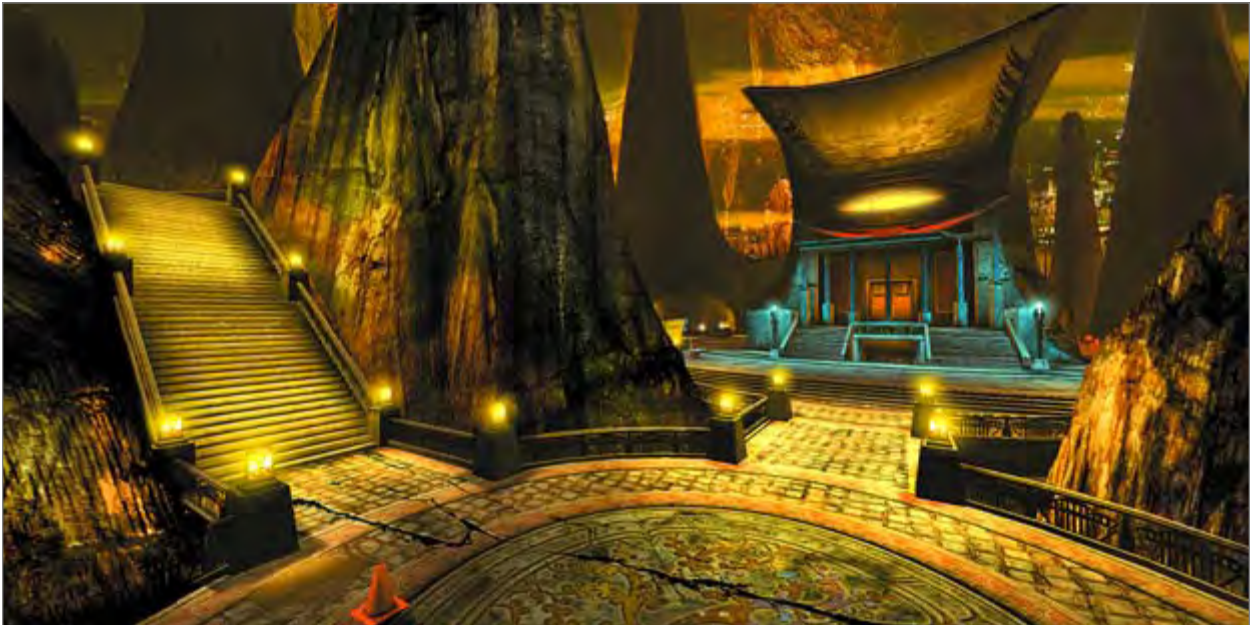


An early layout of the city of D'ni, hand-sketches in painstaking detail (art by Mark Engberg).

MR. TEBBS GOES TO WASHINGTON

Cyan and Headspin's partnership formally began in 1999. Initially, the two companies tried to work together from opposite sides of the country, similar to the way that Rand and Robyn Miller had produced *Manhole* while living in Texas and Seattle.

However, DIRT proved to be too complex of a project to work on across such a vast distance. Tony Fryman describes trying to make the long-distance partnership work: "It was horrible, because there's no direct service out of Spokane [International Airport] to anywhere! And they were on the East Coast, so it was an all-day travel adventure. We actually tried it long distance for a period of time before it became clear that that just wasn't going to work."



This matte Photoshop painting set a high bar for *Uru*'s design team. (art by Josh Staub).



Uru's pre-production concept art was created in a variety of media: pen-and-paper sketches, 3D computer models, and this clay model of the city of D'ni.



Brice also found the Cyan partnership appealing, but the 3,000-mile gap frustrating. “That got to be really nuts pretty quickly. So in 2000, essentially the entire company moved out here.”

“It was a pretty good sales job, to get all of those folks to move from lovely Raleigh-Durham to the Pacific Northwest,” says Tony. “But, in the end, we moved all but one or two people. The folks that came out here made a commitment that they would be with us long enough to try it and move us forward on the project. I think everybody stayed at least a year, and then after a year, a few people drifted back [east], but we got good replacements.”

With Headspin’s relocation, the company was essentially merged into Cyan. Initially, there were some “cultural differences” between Cyan and the former Headspin employees, according to Brice. “We were more of a programmer-dominated company, and Cyan, I would say, was more of an artist-dominated company. And so in terms of differences in approaches, they see everything as if it’s a painting, and we see everything like it’s a simulation. That’s where some of the tension comes from. Some of the tension is good and some of it’s not so good; it depends on what day it is. But it’s sort of a natural conflict.”

EVOLUTION OF AN IDEA



All of *Uru*’s Ages began as concept art, such as this painting that shows the New Mexico desert from the beginning of the game [art by Steve Ogden].



When the concept art for an Age is complete, a “target” piece of artwork is created by layering images in Photoshop. This gives the 3D modeling artists a goal to shoot for [art by Josh Staub].



An early shot of the desert as it appeared in early 2001, slightly devoid of life.



By late 2001, the desert was beginning to shape up a bit more.



The desert in its final form, not too far from the target.

MUDPIE

As the months of work on DIRT gave way to years, the nature of the project changed as well. The concept of DIRT was giving way to something code named MUDPIE. Like DIRT, MUDPIE was an acronym, but even Rand can't remember exactly what MUDPIE stood for: "Multi-User DIRT ... PIE was Persistent Internet Entertainment. Or, there's a few other little acronyms you can use, but it was all that same idea."

The idea was to take DIRT—the 3D, third-person adventure game—and make it into a shared online experience in which hundreds or thousands of players could interact with each other in D'ni.

Although massively multiplayer games were relatively new to PC gaming, Rand had the basic idea for MUDPIE years before. "[Rand] had the conception for the whole online thing a long time ago, even before *Riven*," says Ryan. "[He] and Robyn would get all pumped up about a game that was like an amusement park—going back to the manhole thing—where you walk by one day and the manhole's there, and you walk by a day later and the manhole's gone, and there's a ladder leading down, into an endless game.

"I remember when [Cyan was] making DIRT, I took a year off and when I came back, [Rand] said, 'I think we're going to do that project.'"

"STUPID" EQUALS VISIONARY?

"We started DIRT knowing that it was a good place to start," says Rand, "but in the back of my mind, we were always hoping to be able to do online entertainment. Even before *Riven*, we talked about doing an online game, and we even went down and talked to some companies about it."

And just as Rand had looked at the 3D real-time games of 1997 and envisioned something that could rival *Riven* in terms of graphical brilliance, he had similar visionary ideas about the nature of online gaming. "Even then, we weren't interested in low bandwidth," he says. "We didn't want low bandwidth, we wanted broadband, we wanted high bandwidth. [We figured we'd] drive the bandwidth," just as *Myst* had driven sales of CD-ROM drives years before.

"And some of that, frankly, was just that we were naive," says Rand. "A lot of it is just stupid. But I think there's a certain amount of naiveté in getting things done sometimes. Stupid people do things. That's how I feel sometimes."

As it turned out, broadband Internet access would become more common by the time that *Uru*, the game formerly known as MUDPIE and DIRT, was released in November of 2003. But there was no way that Rand or anyone else at Cyan could have known that. "It was a big step," says Rand, "because it was long before broadband had enough people to support it. We were just anticipating that it would."



This "massing model" from 2000 shows an early MUDPIE vision of how multiple players were supposed to be able to congregate together in D'ni.



The Cyan visionaries, hard at work.



More early models of various areas in D'ni.

IT'S TWO, TWO, TWO GAMES IN ONE

As if Cyan's prediction of the future of broadband Internet access wasn't impressive enough, the concept behind MUDPIE was so ahead of its time that, by the time it was released four years later, still nothing else in video game stores was like it. Instead of a pure multiplayer experience, or an essentially single-player game that could be played online against human opponents, MUDPIE could be played as a single-player game or an online game, and each version would be a completely different experience.

"I was looking at a videotape of a presentation in '99 where we were espousing the hybrid idea," says Rand. "You buy this game off the shelf and play it and have this great [single-player] adventure. Then at some point, if you have a broadband connection, you come back in and things start to change. The world doesn't stop, it just continues on. It felt very natural."

Unlike many other massively multiplayer online PC games, which depended on competition or social interaction between human players for their appeal, MUDPIE was intended to deliver new content at regular intervals. Subscribers would, in effect, receive MUDPIE expansion packs on a regular basis, with new Ages to explore and an ongoing serialized story in which they played a part.

The concept was coming together. All it lacked was a name.



In 2001, Cyan finished building a second studio in Mead, Washington. *Uru*'s development swelled the company's size to a record 55 employees.



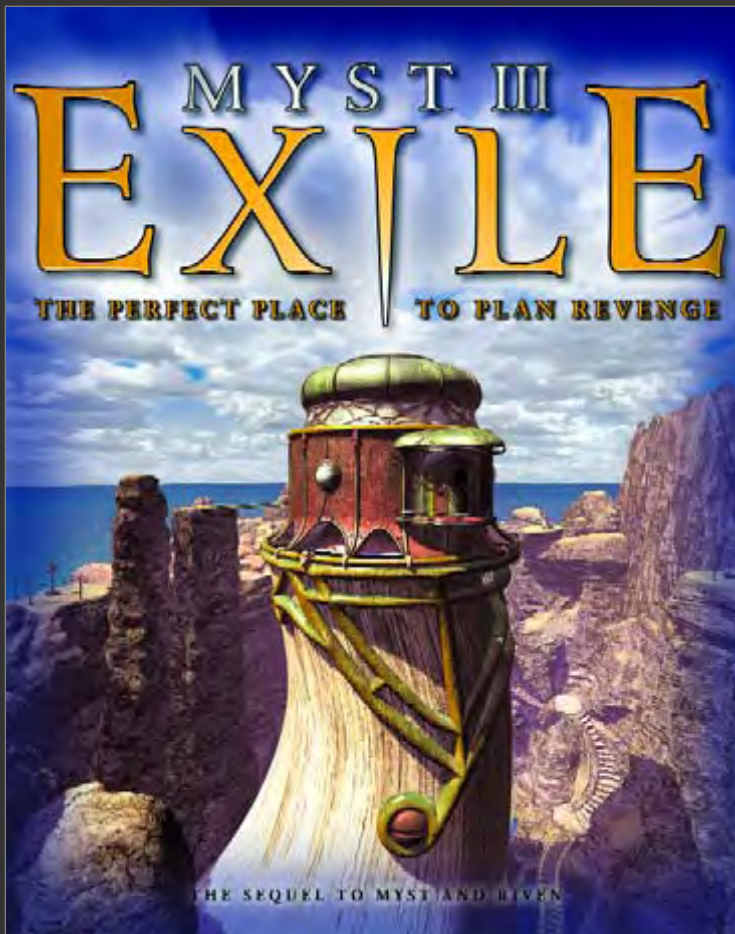
Myst's "falling man" logo appears on the floor of the new studio as a masking tape outline.



The ubiquitous orange safety cones aren't just seen in *Uru*; they're scattered around the Cyan offices as well.



Cyan's second studio had more of an open, industrial feel to it, which allowed for the *Uru* team members to constantly reconfigure the space according to their current needs.



Myst III: Exile—the only *Myst* game not developed by Cyan.

MYST III: EXILE

While Cyan was working on the game that would become *Uru: The Ages Beyond Myst*, a third *Myst* game was released, *Myst III: Exile*. It was the only *Myst* game that Cyan did not develop.

"We'd said that we wouldn't do another sequel," says Rand. "We didn't care about doing another sequel in the *Myst/Riven* timeframe or scenario. Halfway through the process [of making *Uru*], our publishers kept switching and being sold, and the publisher at the time called and said, 'We want to do a sequel; you need to let somebody else do the sequel.'"

Cyan refused. "And [the publisher] said, 'There's a lot of money in it,'" says Rand, but again, Cyan refused. "And the money kept getting bigger, and we kept saying, 'No, we don't want a sequel.'"

"Finally, it wasn't the money, it was this argument that convinced us: 'Did you ever think that the fans might actually want a sequel?' " Cyan had always been known as a fan-friendly company that was uncommonly accessible to its devoted followers, and Rand couldn't come up with a rebuttal.

"In the long run, we knew that *Uru* was going to take a long time," says Rand, "and it wasn't going to be a sequel; it was going to be more of a spin-off than a sequel. So we started thinking about it. We got some good money, and we went down and talked with Presto [Studios, *Myst III*'s developer], and they had a good idea [for the game]."

Although Cyan had final approval over *Myst III*, they allowed Presto Studios a remarkable amount of creative latitude. "We didn't want absolute approval," says Rand. "It kind of squelches the creative process. There were places that they couldn't go, but beyond that, we wanted them to have some degree of freedom. Otherwise, it just doesn't turn out well. It's like design by committee."

Rich Watson, who had been placed in charge of much of *Uru*'s game design and story, oversaw *Myst III*'s storyline. "I was mostly a consultant for when they had questions, like 'Can we do this?' and 'Does this contradict backstory?' We didn't tell them what to do, really, we just kind of guided them."

"We made sure that we drew the line so that they couldn't encroach on the *Uru* storyline stuff," says Rand. "They could keep the *Myst* franchise stuff rolling, and they did a good job. The fans got another [*Myst*], which I think they appreciated. We could keep working on what our vision was, and everybody was happy."

And while the money wasn't everything, "we cut a sweet deal for it," laughs Rand. "Yeah, it was ... it was a sweet deal! If you really don't want to do something, if the money doesn't matter, that's the best position to be in when you're cutting deals!"

URU

As MUDPIE began taking shape, Cyan started thinking about what to call the game. “Parable” and “Myst Online” were used as code words for the game after MUDPIE was discarded, but it was Rand who would discover the game’s final name by chance.

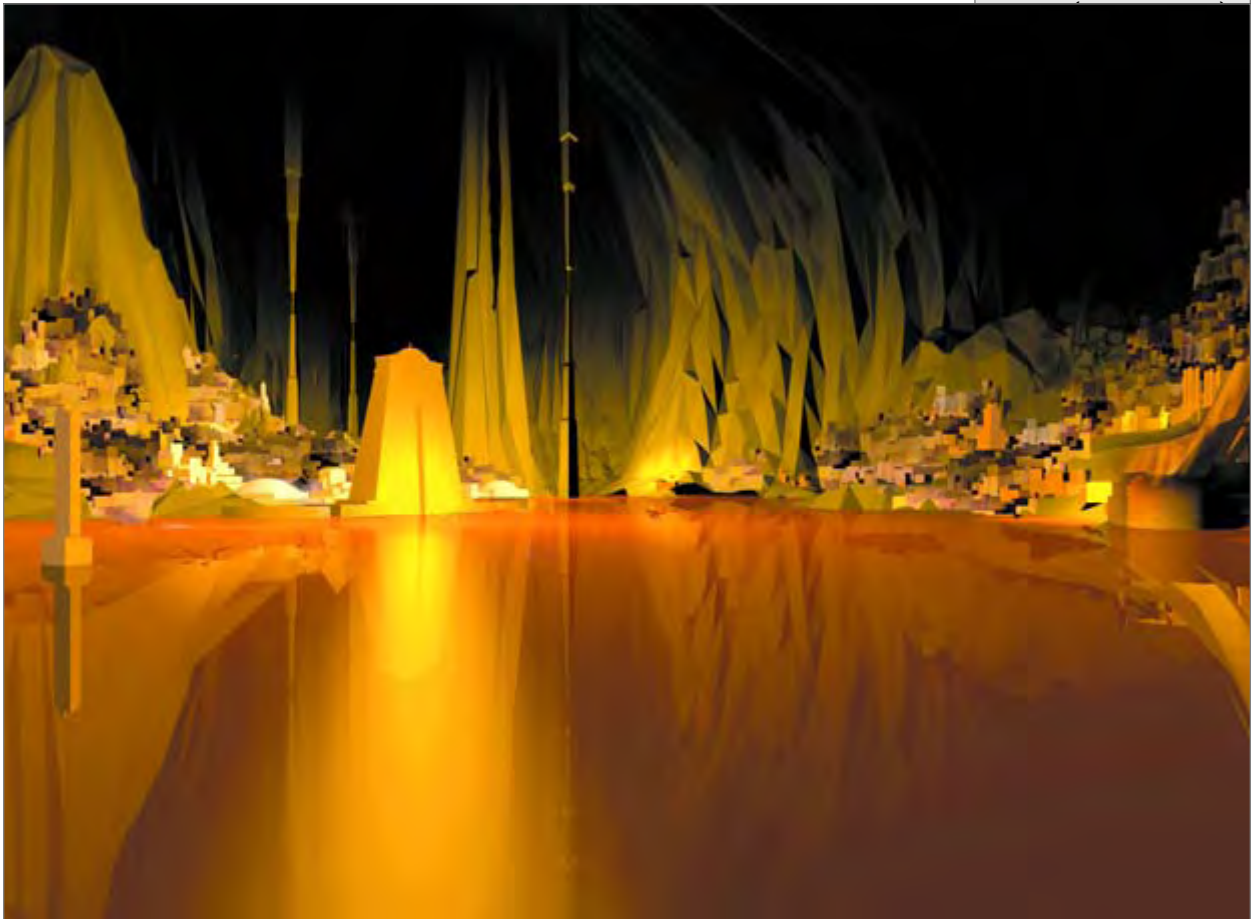
“Rand’s always looking on the Internet for unique words,” says Rich Watson, “and he stumbled on *uru*,” an ancient Sumerian word meaning “deep city,” which resonated with the underground city of D’ni. Uru was selected for its Sumerian meaning, but it proved to tie in even more closely with the game’s plot, which involved the discovery and reconstruction of D’ni by players who felt called to it.

Rand chose Uru for the name of the game, “and then all this meaning started being heaped on it,” says Rich. “We found out that it’s a word in Hebrew that means ‘awaken.’ It’s a word in Japanese that means ‘to gather.’ It’s got all of these meanings that are applicable, even though we didn’t intend that when we picked it.”

“It supposedly is also one of the first written words in the history of the world,” says Ryan. From *uru* comes Ur, the name of one of humanity’s earliest cities.

And isn’t it convenient that Ur sprang up right around the time that the D’ni first arrived on earth...?

A 3D-scale mockup of the entire





An early default avatar used during development. This obedient little fellow's name was Simon, as in "Simon says."

YOU ARE YOU

An often overlooked but central concept of the *Myst* series of games is the idea that players don't take on another role. In *Myst*, *Riven*, and even *Myst III: Exile*, everything was shown from a first-person perspective so that players would feel that they were actually part of the game world.

Uru continued this idea by allowing players to create "avatars" (characters) that looked like their real-life personas. *Uru* wasn't about taking on an alter ego; it was about extending your own personality into a meticulously detailed world. And so it was with some delight that *Uru*'s designers realized that the name of the game, when spelled out loud, sounds like "you are you."

Several examples of the customizable avatar models for *Uru*.





WORD GETS OUT

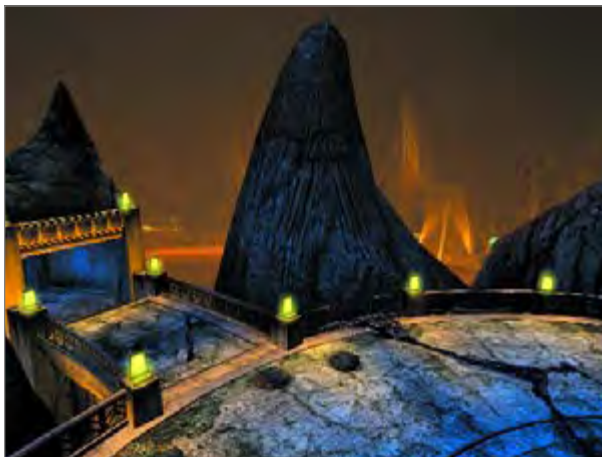
Eventually, word about *Uru* started getting out, although Cyan did a good job of keeping it under wraps. Because Rich Watson answered most of the company's e-mail, it fell to him to keep *Uru* a secret.

"The first time I really started answering what we were working on was back in '99 when the publisher came to us about *Myst III*," says Rich. "We wanted to let people know why we weren't doing *Myst III*, because we were getting e-mails about it. [I just said,] 'Yeah, we're working on something big, and we're not saying what it is yet. We don't know when it'll be done. It's going to take a while.'"

Uru had the best defense against leaking rumors; it was constantly changing and, at first, difficult to describe. "It had taken so many twists and turns and changes in story and look and feel," says Chris Brandkamp. "I think it's not only a significant change for us, but for the industry. The way we're going about this is really very complex to just get it out there and make it work."

Even the developers themselves initially had more questions about *Uru* than they had answers. "It was very easy to explain around here until we came up with the single-player idea," says Ryan. "Even here, everyone was trying to understand what exactly it meant. There were all kinds of issues about how we're going to have the same Ages in the single-player box, and they're also going to be online."

Simon, the original *DIRT* avatar, looks out over D'ni in this rough model. Right about the time that this image was created, fans were starting to ask questions about Cyan's new project.



Uru Live was to have brought players to D'ni in a multiplayer environment. Unfortunately, *Uru Live* was not to be, but players can still visit D'ni in the free *To D'ni* expansion pack.

URU LIVE

To help explain *Uru*, and to distinguish between the single-player and online multiplayer modes of the game, Cyan dubbed the planned online portion of the game *Uru Live* and internally referred to the single-player “box” game as *Uru Prime*.

Not only did Cyan intend *Uru Live* to create an appealing game world for the player, but it also would have allowed Cyan to become more flexible in terms of game development. “When you consider the amount of effort that we have put into developing this thing, it’s tough to just leave it in the boxed model,” says Chris Brandkamp. “I can’t even imagine starting now on a new one, *D’ni III* or *Uru II* or whatever. It’s almost unthinkable, given the amount of effort put into developing this thing, that you wouldn’t hang onto it and simply add to it.”

Unfortunately, the *Uru Live* project proved to be too ambitious for its time. The *Uru Live* subscriber base never reached the level where it would have covered the development costs associated with maintaining *Uru Live*. However, all was not lost. The content originally intended for *Uru Live* has been modified and will be available as a series of single-player *Uru* expansion packs. *Uru*’s online community remains vibrant as well, allowing players who feel “the Call” to D’ni to share their ideas and experiences.

Although the demise of *Uru Live* was disheartening, *Uru* was met with tremendous critical acclaim. Media outlets from *Time* to *PC Gamer* showered *Uru* with high praise. The entire *Uru* team remains proud of its accomplishments, both on a personal level and a professional level.

“The company changed when we went from *Myst* to *Riven*,” says Chris Brandkamp, “and the company really has significantly changed with this product. We’ve grown to fifty-some-odd people now, but there’s been a cohesive congealing of this company as a team that I think was different than with *Riven*.”

“With *Riven*, we had a lot of people working on a project, and when the project concluded, that was kind of it, and a lot of people left to do their own things. But the company has evolved and matured into a significantly stronger company with a long-term vision. And I think that’s partially the growth of the people, but it’s also the development of the type of projects that we’re working on.”



“The company has evolved and matured into a significantly stronger company with a long-term vision.”

—Chris Brandkamp



CHAPTER 17



THE MYST MYTHOS

MYST CHRONOLOGY

As with *The Lord of the Rings*, *Star Wars*, and other great works of fantasy, the *Myst* mythos is a rich tapestry woven from many different threads. It's also one of the first fantasy epics to tell its story via several types of media without designating any part of it as apocryphal. Through CD-ROM games, novels, and now a massively multiplayer persistent online experience, the story that began on an island dock in 1991 continues to this day.

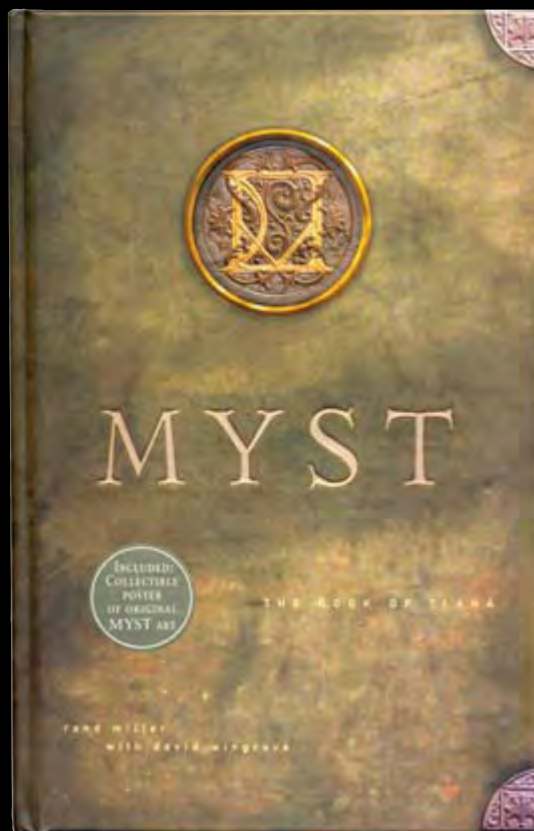
MYST: THE BOOK OF TI'ANA

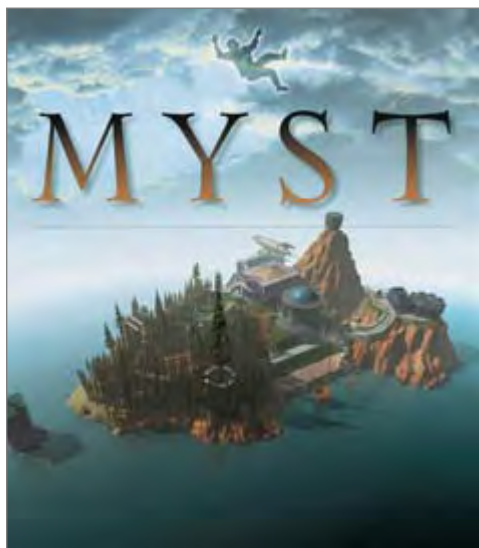
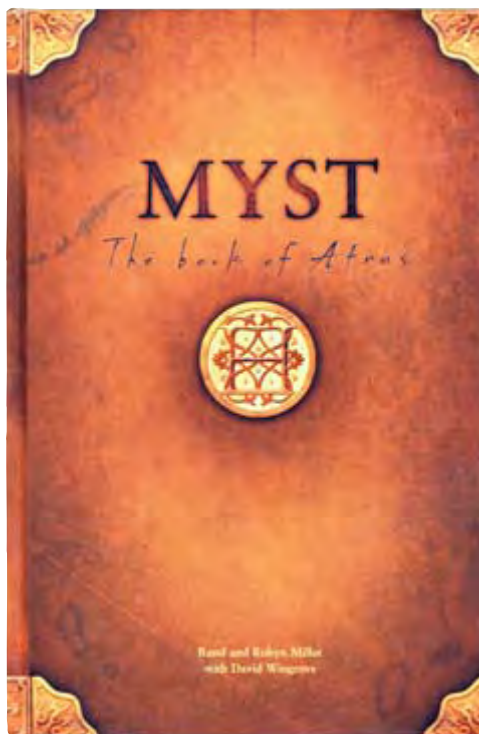
Published in 1996 as the second of three *Myst* novels, the events in *The Book of Ti'ana* are based on the journals of Atrus's wife Catherine. In terms of the *Myst* storyline, *Ti'ana* is set approximately 250 years in the past.

The Book of Ti'ana tells the story of how Atrus's human grandmother, Anna (*Ti'ana* in D'ni) discovers the city of D'ni and becomes a part of its culture. Initially, she is shunned as an outsider, but she proceeds to earn full legal D'ni citizenship, if not acceptance from all of the D'ni people.

During Anna's time in D'ni, she meets, falls in love, and marries a D'ni man by the name of Aitrus, Atrus's grandfather. Despite Anna's being human and Aitrus D'ni, they manage to have a son, Gehn.

The Book of Ti'ana ends with the fall of the city of D'ni and its people. Two disgraced D'ni noblemen, Veovis and A'gaeris, spread a plague that kills most of the D'ni and forces the rest to flee through Linking Books, scattering their people across hundreds of Ages. Because Anna had pleaded with the D'ni Council to spare Veovis's life some years prior, there are some surviving D'ni, including her son Gehn, who blame her for D'ni's fall.





MYST: THE BOOK OF ATRUS

The Book of Atrus was published in 1995 and is the first of the three *Myst* novels. Like the other two *Myst* novels, it is based upon the journals of Atrus's wife, Catherine. Although it was published before *The Book of Ti'ana* and after *Myst*, the events in *Atrus* take place after *Ti'ana* and before *Myst*, approximately 200 to 250 years ago.

The Book of Atrus is, as the title suggests, the story of Atrus, the central figure of the *Myst* mythos. Raised by his grandmother, Anna, in a desert cleft in what would eventually be known as New Mexico, Atrus is initially almost completely unaware of the existence of D'ni.

However, his estranged father, Gehn, returns to collect the adolescent Atrus and bring him down to D'ni, the great cavernous city lying deep beneath the desert cleft. In D'ni, Gehn teaches Atrus the Art of writing Linking Books and attempts to reconnect the boy to his D'ni heritage in the dead city.

However, Atrus soon realizes that Gehn lacks the discipline and restraint instilled in the D'ni writers because Gehn believes himself to be a god over the Ages he links to. Atrus reveals Gehn as a fraud and traps him in Riven, one of Gehn's own Ages. Atrus retires to the Age known as *Myst* with Catherine, his wife whom he met on Riven, and his grandmother, Anna.

MYST

Developed by Cyan and published by Broderbund Software (PC and Mac versions) and Sunsoft (all other versions) in 1991, *Myst* was the first glimpse into the world of the D'ni. For story purposes, *Myst*'s story is based on events from 200 years ago that were recorded in Catherine and Atrus's journals. According to the overarching *Myst* mythos, Rand and Robyn Miller actually journeyed down to D'ni with Dr. Richard Watson prior to making the game.

Myst begins at the exact moment that *The Book of Atrus* ends, with the Linking Book to *Myst* falling through a starry fissure and landing at the player's feet.

During the course of *Myst*, the player discovers the unsavory history of Atrus and Catherine's sons, Sirrus and Achenar. Although Atrus never taught them to write Ages, the brothers did have access to their father's library of Linking Books, and they ruled over the inhabitants of the Ages with an iron fist, much as did their grandfather, Gehn.

Upon discovering his sons' betrayal, Atrus imprisoned them inside Linking Books, removed six pages from each Linking Book, and scattered the pages around various Ages.

Atrus himself is trapped in D'ni because a single page is missing from his *Myst* Linking Book. When the player restores that single page, Atrus is freed. He destroys his sons' Linking Books, trapping them in their Prison Ages for all time, and tells the player that his wife, Catherine, is being held hostage in another Age. Atrus returns to his writing but tells the player that he might need help in the future to free his wife from the clutches of his unnamed foe.

NOTE

Myst was rereleased as *Myst Masterpiece Edition* in 1995 and again as *realMyst* in 2000. *Masterpiece* and *realMyst*'s storylines are identical to the original *Myst*'s.

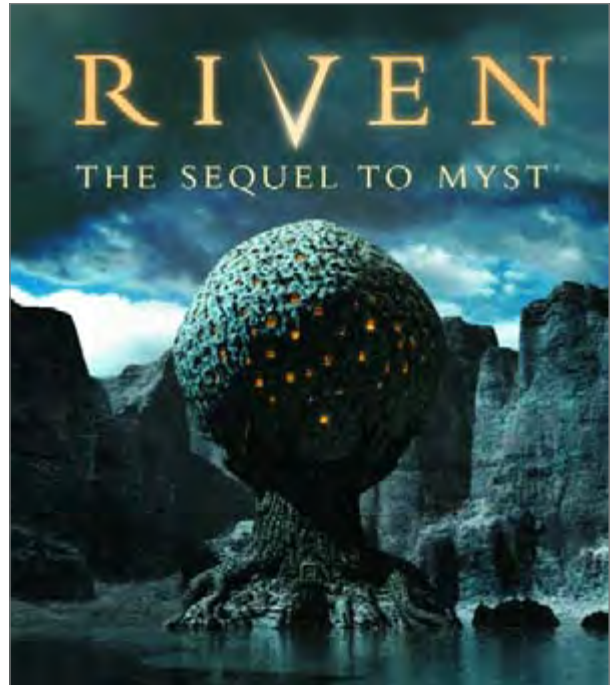
RIVEN

Riven was the second *Myst* game that Cyan developed; it was published in 1997 by a host of companies (Acclaim, RedOrb, Sunsoft, and Broderbund). Like *Myst*, the events of *Riven* were based directly on Atrus and Catherine's journals, events that took place almost immediately after *Myst* (approximately 200 years ago).

At the start of *Riven*, Atrus's wife, Catherine, is being held hostage in her home Age of Riven by his father (and her former fiancé), Gehn. Riven was the fifth Age that Gehn wrote, and like all of Gehn's Ages, it is geologically unstable. Atrus must remain in D'ni and continue making subtle corrections to Riven long enough for the player to rescue Catherine.

The player goes to Riven with a trapped Linking Book that appears to contain a link back to D'ni. Near the end of the game, the player is captured by Gehn, who makes the predictable mistake of assuming that the trapped book is supposed to be the player's means of returning to D'ni. Gehn uses the Linking Book and traps himself in a Prison Age.

The player then rescues Catherine, who leads her people to safety in the Moiety Age that she wrote. As Riven crumbles, Atrus and Catherine give thanks for the player's help, and the player leaves Riven through the star fissure that brought the original *Myst* Linking Book to Earth at the end of *The Book of Atrus*.

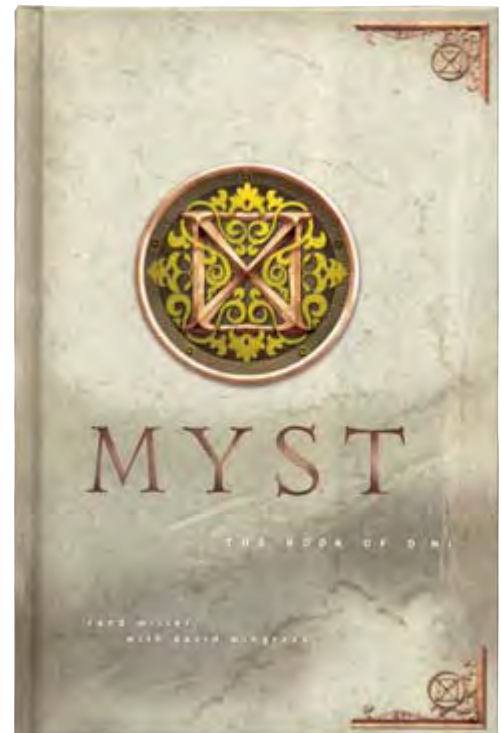


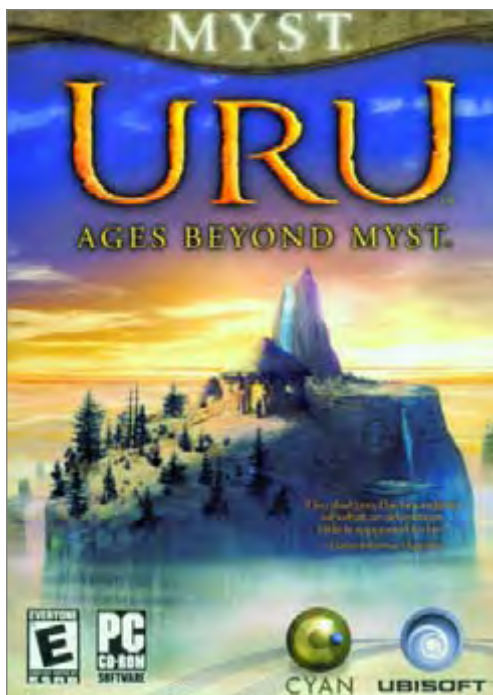
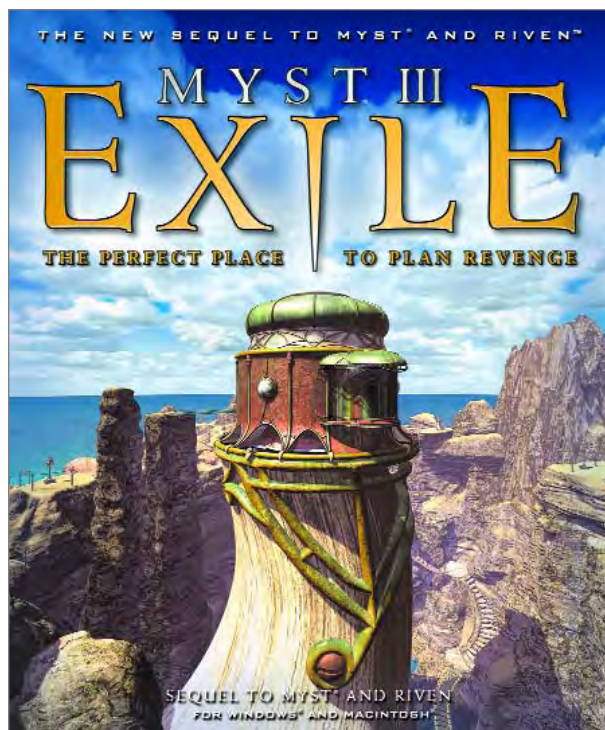
MYST: THE BOOK OF D'NI

Published in 1997, *The Book of D'ni* is the third and (to date) last *Myst* novel. The story was taken from Catherine's journals, and the events described within happened shortly after *Riven*, slightly less than 200 years ago.

After enduring the betrayals of his sons, the vindictive evil of his father, and the death of his grandmother, Atrus attempts to find purpose in his life by journeying to all of the Ages in the D'ni city Linking Books and trying to convince D'ni survivors to return to the city and rebuild their culture.

During the reconstruction, the D'ni survivors discover a long-buried temple containing a Linking Book to the Age of Terahnee, a land of impossible beauty and opulence.





MYST III: EXILE

Myst III: Exile was the only chapter of the *Myst* mythos not developed by Cyan (although Cyan provided a great deal of guidance during the creation of the game). Developed by Presto Studios and published by UbiSoft in 2001, *Exile* is a side-story set after the events of *Riven* and *The Book of D'ni*.

Exile is the story of Saavedro, a man born and raised in an Age called Narayan. Atrus first made contact with Saavedro and the people of Narayan after the events of *The Book of Atrus* but before *Myst*. Atrus entrusted Saavedro with the care and teaching of Sirrus and Achenar, because Atrus had become somewhat obsessed with the restoration of D'ni at that point.

Unfortunately for Saavedro and Narayan, Sirrus and Achenar did not share their father's enlightened sense of responsibility for the Ages that D'ni writers link to. On Narayan, the brothers began their pattern of plundering Ages that would lead to their imprisonment in Prison Ages, as seen in *Myst*. Before embarking on their brutal conquest of Narayan, they trapped Saavedro in the J'natin Age, leaving him for dead.

After many years (and the imprisonment of Sirrus and Achenar), Saavedro escaped from J'natin with the unintentional assistance of Atrus, who had written J'natin's descriptive book years ago.

At the start of the game, Saavedro, now quite mad, uses a Linking Book that Atrus left behind to link to Atrus and Catherine's new home in the Tomahna Age. Though his original intent is to kill Atrus and his family, Saavedro eventually decides to hold Atrus's new Relesahn Age hostage, under the misapprehension that Atrus can restore Narayan to its original, unspoiled state. It is the goal of the player to rescue the Relesahn descriptive book and defeat Saavedro.

URU: AGES BEYOND MYST

Released at the end of 2003, *Uru: Ages Beyond Myst* is the first new Cyan-developed chapter in the *Myst* franchise since *Riven*. This long-awaited real-time adventure is the culmination of Rand Miller's desire to finally bring players to the lost city of D'ni. Initially, Cyan intended players to experience *Uru* in two distinctly different ways: as a standalone boxed product (referred to internally by Cyan as *Uru Prime*), and as a massively multiplayer online experience, *Uru Live*, which is the single-player version of *Uru Prime*. However, with the demise of *Uru Live*, that content has been transformed into a series of *Uru* expansion packs.

URU

Although *Uru* is an integral part of the *Myst* mythos, it is more of a spin-off than a direct sequel to *Myst* and *Riven*. Atrus, a principal character in every other *Myst* game and novel, never appears in *Uru*. Instead, *Uru* focuses on Atrus and Catherine's daughter Yeesha and the next generation of characters.

At the start of *Uru*, the player meets Jeff Zandi, the son and heir of the late Elias Zandi, who purchased the area of land in the New Mexico desert around Anna and Atrus's Cleft. Zandi encourages the player to explore the Cleft and, in doing so, to undertake a journey designed by Yeesha that teaches the player about the self-destructive pride of D'ni and the D'ni's exploitation of a race called the Bahro.

However, Yeesha's motives aren't purely altruistic. During the course of the journey, the player must find and acquire four Bahro Pillars; not until after completing the journey do players realize that by doing so, they have released a Bahro from some sort of imprisonment. The end of *Uru* leaves players with an unsettled feeling: what did they just do, and was it the right thing to do?

TO D'NI AND PATH OF THE SHELL

The journey that began in *Uru* continues in a planned series of single-player expansion packs, the first of which is *To D'ni*. Offered as a free download to make up for the promised *Uru Live*, *To D'ni* allows the player to journey to the cavern city of D'ni and discover why a group of human archaeologists known as the D'ni Research Council decided to abandon their decade-long reconstruction of D'ni. *To D'ni* allows players to walk down the D'ni streets that they could only glimpse from balconies and rooftops in *Uru*.

The second expansion pack, *The Path of the Shell*, picks up where *To D'ni* leaves off, taking the player on a journey to uncover Yeesha's destiny. Where *Uru* tells the story of D'ni's past and *To D'ni* tells the story of its present, *The Path of the Shell* shows players the future of D'ni.

At the beginning of *The Path of the Shell*, the player learns of a prophecy that leads to two expansive Ages where a D'ni man named Kadish attempted to convince the D'ni people that he was the One foretold to lead D'ni to a new period of growth and success. The player discovers that Kadish was a fraud and that Yeesha is, in fact, the fulfillment of the prophecy. Through the player's own participation, the prophecy is finally completed. On the cavern island of K'veer, where *Myst* ended, the player and Yeesha together bring light to the cavern in a stunning grand finale.



Concept art of K'veer, where *The Path of the Shell* concludes (art by Victoria Brace).



EVOLUTION OF A MYTHOS



The concept of the Linking Book is central to the entire *Myst* mythos.

The *Myst* mythos is so expansive and detailed that it's hard to imagine a time when it was anything but epic—unless, like Ryan Miller, you were there when it all started. When he was writing the *Myst* journal entries in his high school years, he wrote, “There was nothing there at that time. I don’t know how much of this we want to say, though!”

“I remember picking out [the name] Catherine because I wanted the girl’s name to start with a C for some reason. I don’t even remember why, but I said, ‘yeah, let’s use “Catherine.”’ Now, looking back on what Catherine has become, I just laugh, you know? That’s *Catherine* now!”

LINKING BOOKS

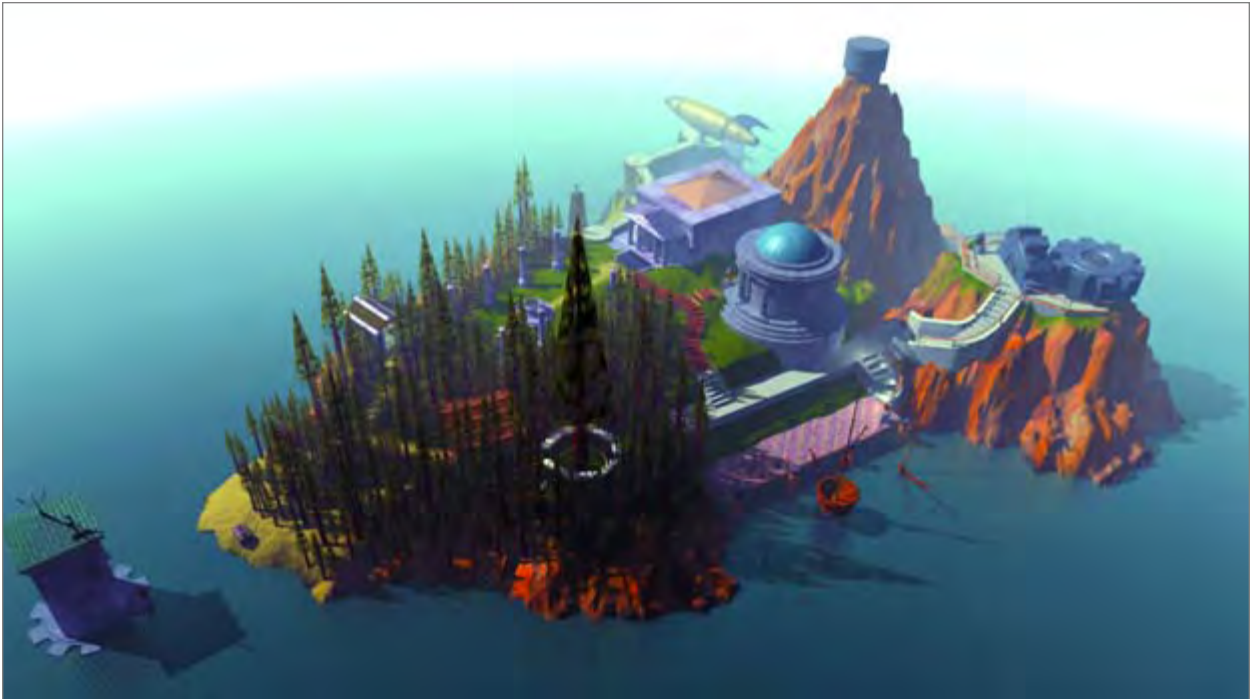
One of *Myst*’s most memorable concepts is the idea of the Linking Book, a tome that contains a precisely written description of an Age written on special paper with a mysterious ink. D’ni writers could spend months, if not years, meticulously detailing the aspects of an Age in a descriptive book, which forges a link between the book and an existing world somewhere in space-time.

Once a descriptive book is completed, its author can write Linking Books for that descriptive book. The Linking Books allow a person to travel to the Age simply by placing a hand on the Linking Panel at the front of the Linking Book. The D’ni rules for linking are almost as precise and ironclad as the language used in the descriptive books:

1. Writers of descriptive books do not create worlds. Each book simply links to one of an infinite number of existing worlds elsewhere in space and time.
2. When you use a Linking Book, you travel to the Age that the book links to, but the Linking Book does not travel with you. You must carry a different Linking Book through a link if you want to return to the Age you linked from; otherwise, you will be trapped in the Age that you linked to.
3. You cannot link from one point in an Age to a different point in that same Age.
4. Making changes to a descriptive book does not change the Age that it originally linked to, but instead creates a new link to a new “instance” of that Age, a completely new Age that has only subtle variations from the original Age.
5. Once an Age has been written in a descriptive book, it is impossible to create a second descriptive book that links to exactly the same Age, even if a writer was to copy the original descriptive book word for word.
6. Destroying a Linking Book or descriptive book does not destroy an Age, but it does prevent anyone from ever linking to that Age again [for the reasons detailed in rule #5].

Even though the concept of the Linking Book is central to the *Myst* story, Ryan remembers a time when these rules didn’t exist. At some point during the summer of 1992, the fledgling game developers fleshed out some of the early linking rules.

Ryan recalls that some of the earliest linking rules were invented almost by accident: “In the journals, there were little things, like [the] *Stoneship* [Age]. Atrus tried to move a boat, [and] he couldn’t get this boat into there. So I’m sure that in writing that journal, we kind of thought, ‘Could you link a boat into an Age? I don’t know. Well, let’s say you couldn’t.’ It just kind of worked itself out in that journal.”



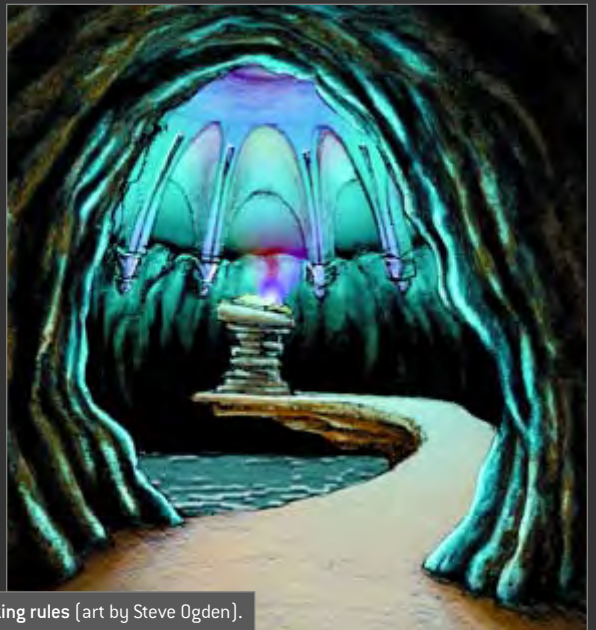
Myst provided the illusion of a glimpse into a meticulously detailed world, but many of the details wouldn't actually be filled in until later!

REWRITING THE RULES

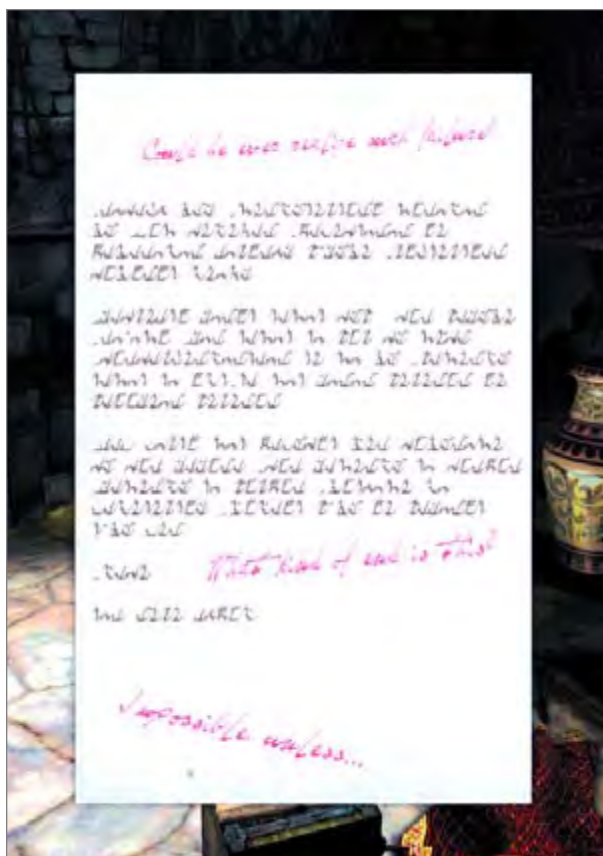
Longtime *Myst* fans will realize that the Linking Book Yeesha gives the player in *Uru* violates just about every linking rule that the *Myst* franchise had held sacred for so long.

For instance, if you fall off of the edge of the island in your Relto Age, your avatar “panic links” back to solid ground in the same Age. Finding Yeesha Pages in the Ages of *Uru* changes the Relto Age but does not appear to create a different instance of the Age. And when the player uses Yeesha’s Linking Book to return to the Relto Age, the Linking Book comes through the link with them.

How does she do it? The Cyan team remains tight-lipped, but they hint at an educational experience Yeesha had after leaving her parents’ nest, where she discovered that some of the D’ni writing rules weren’t quite as ironclad as they seemed in the past. Exactly what happened to Yeesha is a closely guarded secret, however, and one that is expected to play out over the course of a series of expansion packs.



Yeesha’s Linking Book, found in the desert Cleft, breaks most of the D’ni linking rules (art by Steve Ogden).



An example of the D'ni written language: a note found in Kadish Tolesa during *Uru*.

SPEAKING IN TONGUES

Adding to the richness of the Ages of *Uru* is the spoken and written D'ni language, a fictitious yet realistic tongue in the tradition of *Star Trek*'s Klingon or *The Lord of the Rings*' Elvish.

Richard "RAWA" Watson is Cyan's official D'ni linguist. "I've always liked artificial languages," says Rich. "My favorite was from *Alien Nation*; they had Tenctonese. I would sit down and watch the shows and write down everything that they said and figure out what everything was. I was kind of disappointed, because as you figure that language out, it's just anagrams of English words. They use the same word order; they didn't come up with a unique grammar for it."

All of the spoken languages in *Myst* were just gibberish according to Rich, but when development began on *Riven*, he was determined to make the language of D'ni as real as possible. "I kind of wanted D'ni to have more depth than that," he says. "It wasn't really anything deep; I just started small and kept adding to it."

Although D'ni contains elements of several different languages, Rich readily admits that the language he created is the product of an enthusiastic amateur, rather than a linguistic scholar. "I don't know enough about languages to really talk about it," he says. "I learned a little bit of German when I was in elementary school, a little bit of Spanish when I was in high school, and a little bit of Hebrew. And I basically just took, not words from those languages, but concepts. Like in German and in Hebrew, small words like *the* attach to the word it modifies, and so that's in there."

So internally consistent is the D'ni language that the *Uru* team receives grammatical corrections from amateur D'ni linguists. For example, within a couple of days of the Kadish Tolesa Age becoming available for beta testing, one of the testers wrote a detailed critique of the note found at the end of the journey. "The most impressive thing was that he could tell that, on the font that the artist used, two of the letters were swapped," laughs Rich. "I looked and said, 'Yeah, you're right!'"

D'NI: A LANGUAGE PRIMER (courtesy of Richard A. Watson)

Although an alien language, D'ni resembles many human languages in the same way that the D'ni themselves could pass for human. D'ni is most frequently compared to Hebrew, because the two languages have similar characters and sounds. But there are many differences, the most obvious one being that Hebrew is written from right to left, while D'ni is written from left to right.

The D'ni alphabet has 24 characters, but there are more than 24 consonants. The additional consonants are made by adding accent marks to the base consonants. For instance, the character for an "f" sound is the same character for a "p" sound, only the "p" has a dot added to it. Generally, a character without a dot is a fricative, meaning it's produced by air passing continually between the tongue and lips. A consonant with a dot contains a stop, meaning that the air is cut off. In the case of a dotted "f," the air is stopped by the lips, changing it from an "f" to a "p." Also, by adding a dot to certain vowels, D'ni's six vowel characters are used to represent the eleven vowel sounds in their spoken language.

D'ni follows a noun-verb structure common to many Western languages. Adjectives follow the nouns they modify, and adverbs follow the verbs they modify.

Quantifiers, which add emphasis to phrases, such as "very," "extremely," and "really" are indicated by numbers from one to twenty-five. The higher the number is, the stronger the emphasis is. The phrase "I am a little happy" in D'ni becomes "I am happy to two." "I am very happy" would be "I am happy to twenty." Quantifiers above twenty-five indicate a hyperbolic emphasis. For example, "I am deliriously happy" might literally be translated as "I am happy to thirty."

Several common prefixes and suffixes are used in D'ni. As in Spanish, verbs use suffixes to indicate both the number and person of the subject. For example: —

- ▶ The D'ni word for "speak" is "mees." Unmodified, it implies a first-person singular subject ("I speak").
- ▶ The suffix "-en" is added to imply the third-person singular ("he, she, or it speaks" is "mees-en").
- ▶ Third-person plural ("they speak") uses the suffix "-eet" ("mees-eet").
- ▶ First-person plural ("we speak") uses "-et" as a suffix ("mees-et").
- ▶ "You speak" (second-person singular) uses the "-em" suffix ("mees-em").
- ▶ The second-person plural uses the suffix "-tee," meaning that "you (plural) speak" is "mees-tee."
- ▶ You can change second-person phrases into commands by adding the additional suffix "-ah." For example, to order an individual to speak, you would say, "mees-em-ah!"

Verbs use prefixes to indicate the verb's tense—the past, present, and future. To say that you have finished speaking, the phrase is "ko-mees." To say that you are currently speaking, the phrase is "do-mees." To say that you will speak later, the phrase is "bo-mees." Other forms of the prefix are: —

Another common prefix is "re-" for "the." The D'ni word for book is "kor," so to indicate "the book," the phrase is "re-kor." The word "and" is "ga-," so to indicate "and the book," you would say, "ga-re-kor."

Suffixes can also indicate ideas such as possession and plurality. To indicate possession, add the suffix "-okh," which roughly corresponds to "of." The phrase "Gehn's book" in D'ni is structured, "book of Gehn," and is written, "kor-okh Gehn." To make a noun plural, add "-tee" to the end. The word for "books" is "kor-tee."

An adjective, such as "garo" ("mighty"), can be changed to a noun with the suffix "-th," as in "Garoth" ("Mighty One"). You can also change some adjectives into an adverb with the suffix "-sh," as in "garosh" ("mightily").

- ▶ kodo (past progressive): kodo-mees (I was speaking)
- ▶ le (perfect): le-mees (I have spoken)
- ▶ kol (past perfect): kol-mees (I had spoken)
- ▶ bodo (future progressive): bodo-mees (I will be speaking)
- ▶ boko (future perfect): boko-mees (I will have spoken)
- ▶ bodol (future perfect progressive): bodol-mees (I will have been speaking)



“EVERYTHING AROUND US HAS HISTORY”



This ferry terminal on D'ni's Ae'gura Island has 10,000 years of fictional history to draw from.

From the D'ni language to the linking rules, hundreds of tiny, seemingly inconsequential details create a synergy that gives the *Myst* series the illusion of a fully realized world. Rand Miller would have it no other way: “Frankly, any kind of good entertainment has got history to it. So, as you’re building the very place in *Myst*, you’re actually building these islands; you’re actually asking yourself why are these here? And if you don’t try and answer those questions, I think you get second-rate entertainment. And if you do answer those questions, you get stuff that people will respond to.”

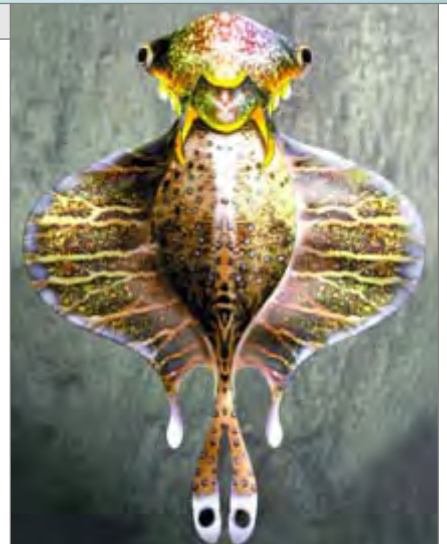
Like many on the *Uru* team, Rand compares the world they have created to J. R. R. Tolkien’s Middle-Earth or the worlds of the far, far away *Star Wars* galaxy. “People respond to Tolkien because he spent years of his life developing why those things were there. He didn’t just tell a story—he came up with why they were there. And I think that, in some regard, that’s even why I was attracted to the first *Star Wars* movie. It wasn’t because it had great acting or some marvelous story, it was because I came in on Episode IV. There’s history, and everything around us has history, so it feels real.”

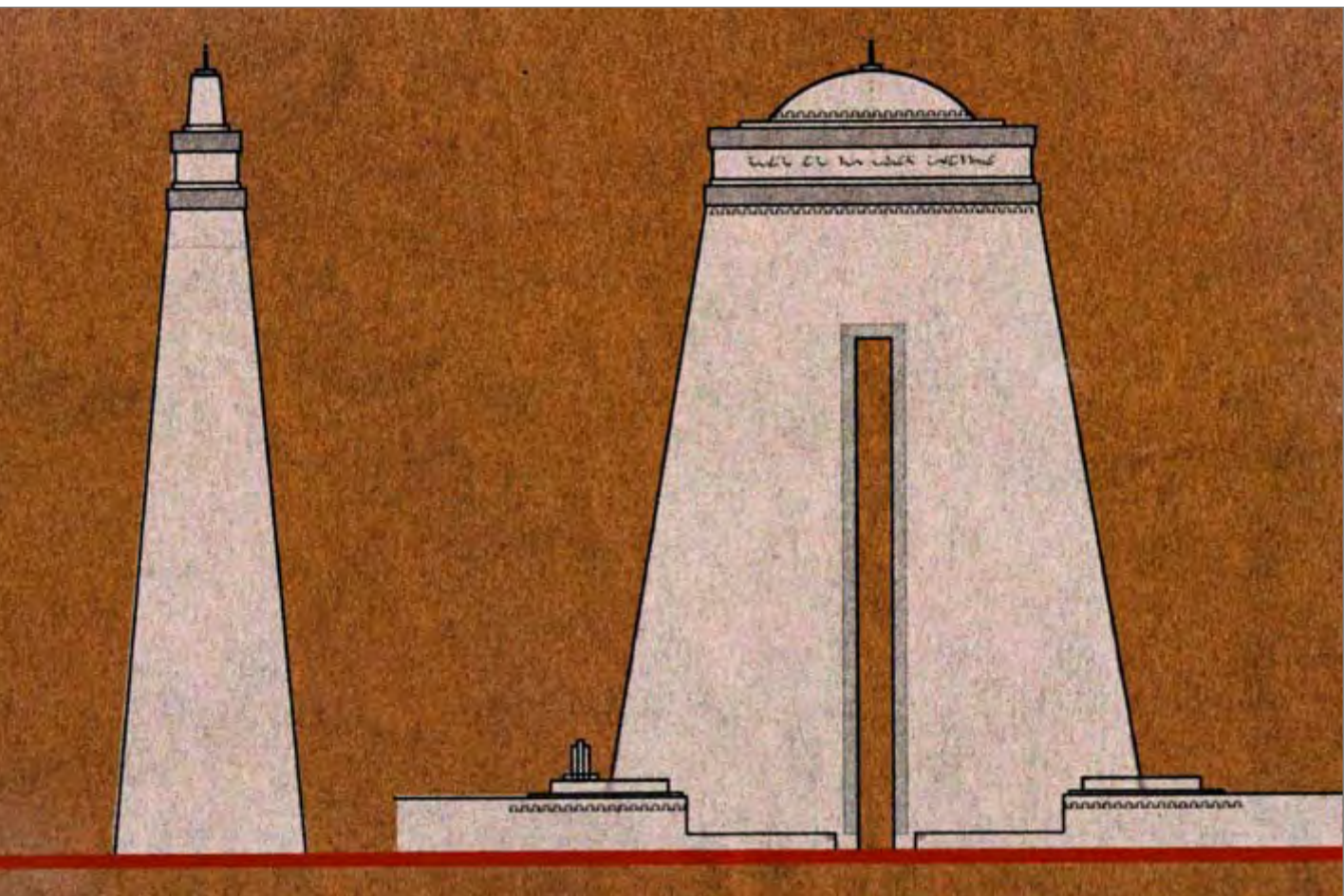
Josh Staub, Cyan’s art director, concurs: “*Lord of the Rings*, *Star Wars*, those are other worlds, and the thing that makes them so believable is that everything is just evidence of that world being a real place. There are tons of ancillary items in those worlds. In the *Star Wars* movies, you were always getting these little glimpses of things that you knew had a much bigger story that you would never find out, but it made it feel like a real place, that people and creatures and things actually lived here.



Concept art of a creature and its hive from the as-yet-unseen Age of Kahlo (art by Stephan Martinieri).

"There are lots of times we create things, we design things, we build things, and if it doesn't fit, we realize why, and I think our fans and the people who play our games catch that too. They'll ask questions, and a lot of times, if we have something that might seem a little bit unusual for this place, we try to have a really good reason why it's there, so if somebody asks, we can explain it to them. I think all of that, put together, ends up being a great place, and a believable place."



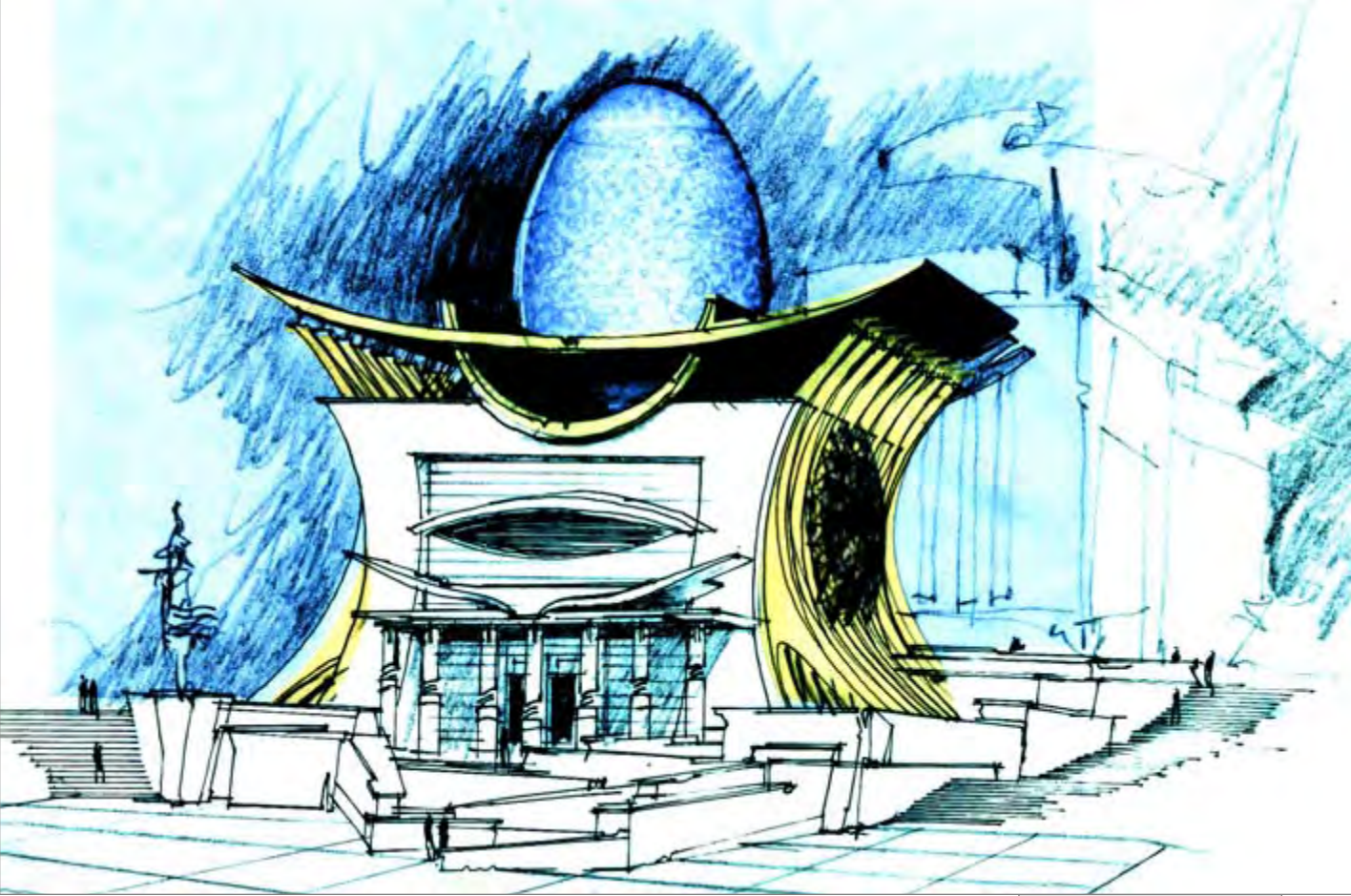


Concept art of Kerath's Arch,
a prominent landmark in D'ni
[art by Robert Grace].

A SELF-PERPETUATING STORY

As someone who has seen the *Myst* storyline evolve since the beginning, Ryan Miller has noticed that, more and more, the story seems to be writing itself. “We have so much information,” he says, “even from Ages that we’ve designed that haven’t been released yet. You just start putting all of that stuff together, and it’s so big now that it really does form itself. There are always times where we say, ‘Oh man, that is cool; that fits right in perfectly and we never saw it,’ and you get chills. It seems like if we want to make histories now ... we have so much information to pull from that they just make themselves.”

Rich Watson concurs: “For me, the word *Uru* is a perfect example. It’s ‘you-are-you,’ and that’s kind of our philosophy; you get to play yourself. And then all this other stuff that we didn’t plan on ends up working out too. That happened all the time—we’d have this little idea, and we’d think that this little idea was cool, and then it just expanded into this thing that we didn’t intend it to.”

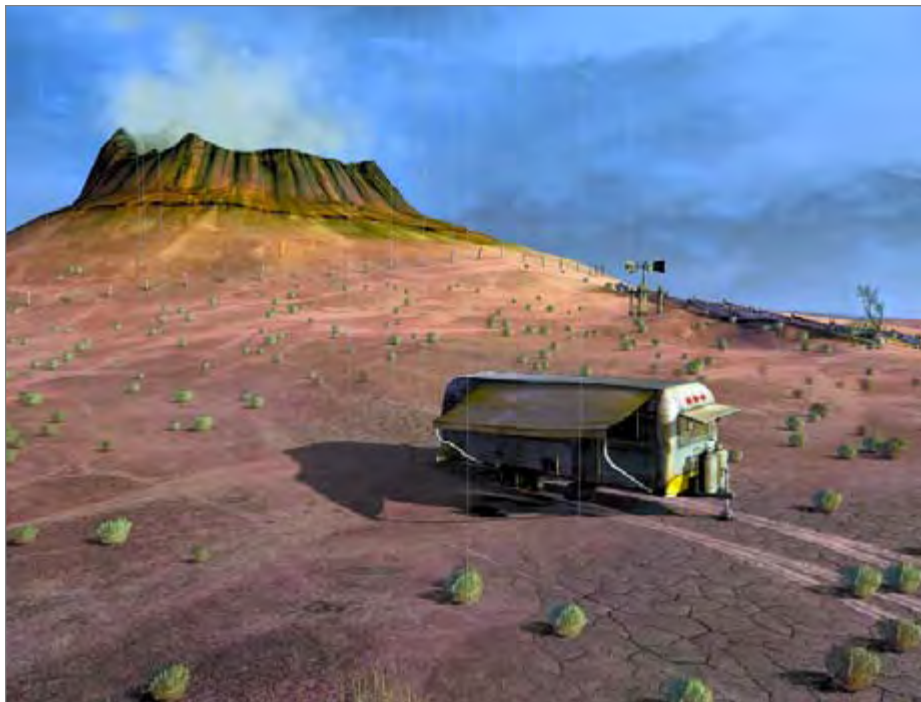


Concept art of a D'ni city library
[art by Mark Engberg].

"It almost isn't even surprising anymore," says Rand. "It's just another connection. And at some point, it's so thick and rich, the storyline now, all the stuff we've built in, it's just bound to have those connections, so it's just a matter of connecting those things up. And suddenly you blur the line between real life and our world.

"And that was the other cool thing about *Uru* is that if it's happening now, and there really is this underground place, we can actually play with those lines, we can blur those lines a bit, and we can use that to our advantage. That's a powerful tool."

With *Uru* taking place in the here and now, the team has been able to draw parallels between human and D'ni history for the first time. "The idea is that the D'ni were on the surface [of Earth] 10,000 years ago, interacting with people on the surface before there were cities, even. And they described this city, this '*Uru*' that they had underground, and so the Sumerians took on that meaning for that city, that gathering place. And Ur, which is one of their earliest cities, is a derivative of '*Uru*.' So we're saying that it was a D'ni word, '*Uru*,' that wound up being one of the first words ever on the surface."



This dormant volcano in the New Mexico desert contains a long and winding path between D'ni and the surface world. How much interaction did the D'ni have with humans during their 10,000-year existence?

And since we've seen that humans and D'ni can produce viable offspring (as with Aitrus and Anna conceiving Gehn), does this imply that the earliest humans had some D'ni blood in them? "Perhaps, perhaps," laughs Ryan. "We're also playing on the idea that everyone feels this 'call' to go down to D'ni. And that provides us with the opportunity to say that everyone could have some D'ni blood in them. So we can all feel a little bit D'ni and kind of get into that."

THE LINKING METAPHOR

In many ways, the creation of *Uru* mirrors the Cyan team's descriptions of the D'ni writers' Linking Books: thousands of meticulous details somehow creating a synergy that can transport a person to a world that already exists somewhere. Josh Staub takes the metaphor one step further: "I think it's pretty obvious at this point that the book is a metaphor for, you know, when you read a book in the real world, it's taking you to another place; you're using your imagination.

"I'm really not a gamer," Josh continues. "There are games that I can get hooked on and I'll finish them in a weekend, but that's pretty rare. What I care most about is creating worlds

that people want to explore, where there are surprises around every corner, and they feel like they are immersed in that place. There's enough evidence, in the realism of the visuals, and the sound, and the historical elements, and the story, and all those things create a place that you feel like could be a real place."



A glimpse of an unreleased Age that you'll only reach if you find the right Linking Book.

THE CHARACTERS OF URU

Although the *Myst* series has always delivered stunningly strange and beautiful worlds, the characters that populate them are no less detailed. For all of *Uru*'s visual splendor and alien vistas, it is populated with some of the most human characters you're likely to find in electronic entertainment.

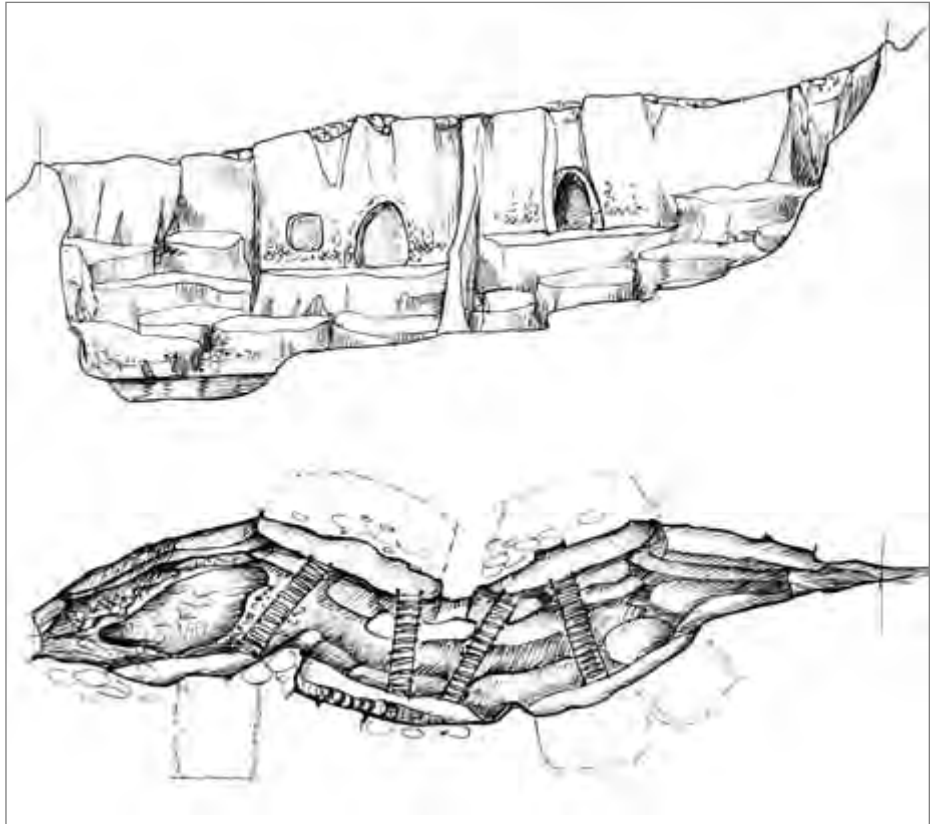
ATRUS

Every *Myst* game and novel has revolved, either directly or indirectly, around the life of Atrus. He is widely thought of among *Myst* fandom as the heart and soul of the franchise. Some of Atrus's importance comes from the fact that Rand Miller is the actor who portrays him in the games, but much of it stems from the richly detailed history of the character.

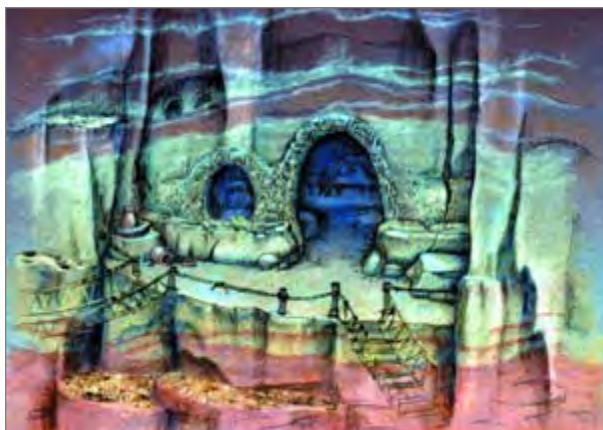
Like so much of the *Myst* mythos, Atrus was an evolving work-in-progress. "Atrus started off as just a character, and started to get a grand story behind him," says Rand. "It was interesting, because some of his story came from one that Robyn was doing that was completely unrelated to *Myst* at the time. We just kind of merged it in and had this outline for it, and then Ryan took it and wrote [an early draft of *The Book of Atrus*] with all the backstory that led right up to *Myst*. At the beginning of *Myst*, you end up falling through this crack and hearing this voiceover from Atrus, and you didn't have a clue where it came from. The novel is what led right up to it and had that as its end.

"It was actually a great exercise for us, building all of that history. In the end it became a novel, but really what we finally realized was the value of that, moving forward."

Atrus's appearance in *Uru* is limited to a recitation of the note to his daughter, Yeesha, that is found in the Cleft—and that isn't unintentional. "He's always been kind of 'the guy,' and we're kind of transitioning to him not being 'the guy' anymore," says Ryan.



Concept art of the desert Chasm in which Atrus, *Myst*'s protagonist, was raised by his grandmother, Anna [art by Victoria Brace].



Uru uses the Cleft to transition between Atrus and Yeesha, between the past and future of the *Myst* story.

and the actions of his father and tried to make up for those. Basically, his obsession with doing that is why he didn't spend any time with Sirrus and Achenar, and so that messed them up. He kind of learns the lesson from that, and he and Catherine spend a lot more time working and training Yeesha."

YEESHA

"We've had big plans for Yeesha since the *Riven* days, and so [*Uru* is] our chance to talk about her," says Rich Watson. Bringing in a completely new major character with ties to the past also

lets Cyan take *Myst* forward into *Uru* without inviting direct comparisons between the two experiences. "It's kind of convenient to leave Atrus with the old stuff and start new stuff with Yeesha," says Rich.

Just as *Uru* is the beginning of something new for Cyan, Yeesha represents a new beginning for her parents, scarred by the betrayal of their sons. "Atrus never taught the brothers how to write," says Rich, "but he does spend that time with Yeesha, and so she turns out to be a mixture of Atrus and Catherine."



The Relto Age, a personal Age designed for the player by Yeesha.

"Where [Catherine]'s intuitive, [Atrus is] kind of logical," says Ryan. "But they're both two of the best writers, and Yeesha's a combination of each.

Unlike her parents, however, Yeesha isn't as sentimental about the history of D'ni. Her criticisms of that long-dead city and its people only underscore the fact that everything that is known about D'ni comes directly or indirectly from Atrus and Catherine's journals. "You've only known one side of the story, and D'ni's been painted in a pretty good light," says Rich. "She's kind of showing you the darker side, that there's more to the story than what you had before. There's a whole other area that Catherine either didn't know about or didn't choose to write about."

"I think it's important to remember that what we've seen up until this point was Catherine's perspective in her journals," says Ryan, "and that kind of leaves us options to go change things, just because it's fun to do on my end, but it also gives us a great in-story reason. D'ni, up to this point, has kind of been painted as 'Happy Land,' in a sense. There was no evil, or wars, or fighting, and they were all peace-loving people. We've said before how [the] D'ni became stagnant in a sense and prideful as a whole toward the later stages of their history. They had a tremendous number of rules inhibiting the creativity in the writing, Yeesha would say. So from her perspective, that whole idea that they became this proud people did lead directly to their fall, in a sense. You can read *The Book of Ti'ana* and see that kind of perspective, even in the way they dealt with Anna, with outsiders.

"What happened to Yeesha is, she left her parents at 16, she moved to the Cleft, she went down to D'ni, and a bunch of stuff happened to her. Maybe we'll get a chance to tell that, and maybe we won't, but that's kind of where she's coming from; it's because she's had this whole experience that hasn't been told anywhere yet."

"Hopefully, she leaves you partly being confused, partly wanting to learn more," says Ryan. "She's not explained or summed up in *Uru* on purpose. For one, she's probably too complex to be summed up anyway. Two, we want people to not quite know how to feel about her. And judging from a lot of the forum posts that we've been reading and fan reaction already, it's working perfectly. People just don't know how to feel about her, and we're going to play on that a lot more in the future.

"If you really look at *Uru*, she did trick you into [freeing the Bahro] for her, if you want to look at it that way. She didn't tell you exactly what you were doing, and she didn't leave you any way to get home. You didn't really have a choice, and now you've brought this creature that you don't have any idea of what it is or what they're for, back to D'ni. And that's another thing that's going to come out later on: was that a good thing that you did or a bad thing? And depending on different people's views and perspectives, there will definitely be two different sides for that one too."



Yeesha is a complex character who isn't easily summed up in *Uru*.

THE BAHRO

Despite the fact that their history ostensibly serves as the reason for the player's journey through *Uru Prime*, the Bahro are only glimpsed from a distance at the end of the game and heard in the depths of the Bahro Caves. We tried to get Rich Watson to bring them into clearer focus, but to no avail:

Q: The word *bahro* shows up in the third *Myst* novel. Are the Bahro in *Uru* the same creatures?

Rich: No, but it's the same root, and it's the same meaning of the word ["beast person"], but it's not referring to the same thing.

Q: Have *Uru's* Bahro shown up in any novel or game thus far?

Rich: Not explicitly. There's some things that, maybe later on, you might be able to go back to and go, "Oh, that makes sense now," but it's not anything that is obvious to anybody reading the books.

Ryan Miller was just as tight-lipped on future plans for the Bahro, but he couldn't repress his excitement about them: "To me, I think, the whole Bahro thing is going to end up being pretty cool. It's going to cause division in our fan base; I think that's going to be fun. That, to me, is one of the most exciting story things we've done."

CHAPTER 18



DESIGNING THE AGES OF URU

STEPHAN MARTINIERE

Before the Ages of *Uru* come to life on the screen, they must first be conceived in the mind of Cyan's Visual Design Director, Stephan Martinieri. A native of France, Stephan's formal art education began at Paris's L'Ecole des Arts Appliques Dupere, in which he enrolled at age 15.

Although Stephan's education also included a general curriculum in language and other basic skills, the main goal of the school was to prepare its students for further university education in the liberal arts or for employment in a creative industry, such as advertising, fashion design, or architecture.

Stephan's education began with a general overview of the industrial arts, from engraving to ceramics. "[We] were also given all the foundations: perspective, anatomy, color, academic drawings. You need to know that stuff as part of your training."



The unique look of *Uru*'s Ages spring forth from the mind of Cyan's Visual Design Director, Stephan Martinieri.



A concept painting for the unreleased Age of Ahnonay (art by Stephan Martinieri).



The influence of *Heavy Metal* comics artist Moebius is evident in this D'ni Maintainer suit design. The suit can be found in the Gahreesen Age in *Uru* (art by Stephan Martiniere).

In his second year of school, Stephan chose to study advertising and architecture, because doing so allowed him to choose an elective course of study in his first love: comic books.

"When I was a kid, I was introduced to [American] magazines like *Strange*, *Marvels*, *Eerie*, *Creepy*, all the big guys like John Buscema, Jack Kirby, Berni Wrightson, the Kuberts ... I was really into that design style, and very much into superheroes and monsters.

"And then, I think in about '75, *Heavy Metal* [*Metal Hurlant*] happened in France, and that was like a revolution. Guys like Moebius and Druillet and Bilal, they became my new big influence. And so I started mixing all of my American influences with these French giants, and my style started to evolve from those foundations."

Stephan continued his studies for four years. "I guess that was a good base, but in some ways I think it was also useless, like every school at the end," he laughs. "That never occurred to me when I was doing it, but once you quit school and start looking for a job, you realize what was missing."

Since there was no formal program of study in comics art, Stephan turned his attention to a related field: animation. "There was an animation school [L'Ecole des Gobelins] that was talked about by some friends of mine, and I said, 'There's no comic book school, so why not see what animation's all about.'"



A concept painting of the "mud rooms" in Gahreesen's training center (art by Stephan Martinieri).

FROM *INSPECTOR GADGET* TO *WHERE'S WALDO*?

Stephan's first animation work was on the American *Inspector Gadget* cartoon. "That was my very first gig. I was not even out of animation school yet. I was supposed to come back and never did."

As Stephan became more and more entrenched in the animation field, comics started to move to the side. "For many years, I started doing pretty much everything [in animation], from concept, design, character design, backgrounds, and then storyboard animation, all that kind of stuff. Then I moved on to become a director."

He counts the animated adaptation of the first five *Madeline* books among the highest points of his animation career. "That show was so well received and won so many awards at the end, that I just couldn't see myself going back and doing a *G.I. Joe* show, because you don't have much control when you do animation for TV; it's very commercial. So I said, 'I'd better quit while I'm hot and I feel good.'"

After years of working as an animation director, Stephan wanted to go back to hands-on design. He did some work in theme park design before gradually drifting back to television and animation. "I ended up at some point working for [the] *Where's Waldo* [series of books], because I had directed the animated series. I actually ended up doing the comic strip for many, many years in the newspaper."

Having taken on a variety of creative challenges and risen to the occasion, Stephan was ready for the next one. And as the twentieth century gave way to the twenty-first, it was only fitting that Stephan would wind up as a core contributor to a bold new experiment in interactive entertainment.



Concept art for a whalelike creature that swims in D'ni's subterranean lake (art by Stephan Martiniere).

“THIS IS THE PLACE IT’S GOING TO HAPPEN”

During his career in animation, Stephan had always kept an eye on Cyan’s work, “just as a fan, because I’ve always liked what they have put out. When I saw *Riven*, that’s when my interest in terms of games started. I was always saying in the back of my mind, ‘Maybe one day I’ll get to work with these guys, you never know.’”

Despite his admiration for *Riven*’s visuals, Stephan, like many of the Cyan team members, was not by any stretch of the imagination a hard-core gamer, nor did he have any ambition to work in the video game industry at that time. “There were so many limitations graphically. [The video game industry] was not ready for me. I think I would have been very frustrated if I was working in that environment.” A few aborted attempts in video game design proved his hypothesis correct.

However, something happened in 2000 that rekindled Stephan’s interest in working in the video game field: Cyan had placed an advertisement in *Cinefex* magazine for an art director. Stephan wasted no time in applying, and Cyan brought him in for an interview. “When they showed me what they were working on, I think that did it for me. I said, ‘I think they’ve finally got the technology to a point where I can really have fun as an artist.’

“I was very impressed, because I was finally seeing technology that was up to the caliber of what I could express as an artist. When I saw what they were capable of doing graphically, I said, ‘Wow, this is it; this is the place it’s going to happen,’ and so I think that’s what made me decide to jump in.”

DESIGNING WORLDS

Each Age that Stephan designs is illustrated in a series of two to six paintings that serve as the foundation for the Age's look and feel. The Ages are then modeled and textured from these paintings by the 3D artists. "Because I work a lot in Photoshop, my painting tends to be very photorealistic. These paintings become the base, and if we need additional elements, then I'll do sketches, little quick ideas and stuff, and I [tell the 3D artists to] take the reference colors from my painting."

Not only are Stephan's concept paintings aesthetically pleasing, but they also portray worlds with a sense of realism about them. "I like architecture," he says. "I even thought at some point of being an architect. So I think it's something that drove me very, very early on. I'm very into making sure that what I design at least works in some fashion."

When it came to designing the worlds of *Uru*, one of the things that made it an interesting artistic challenge for Stephan was the relationship he developed with Rand Miller. "This is one of those games where the design is not just about making things beautiful; there's a whole story behind everything. And because I come from a story background, Rand and I hit it off right from the beginning. I think we had similar thinking about telling stories with design and the complexity of worlds that you can create, and I think that created a very good relationship."



Stephan's concept painting for the Bahro Caves greatly resembles its *Uru* counterpart [art by Stephan Martiniere].



Concept art for the unreleased Laki Age [art by Stephan Martinieri].



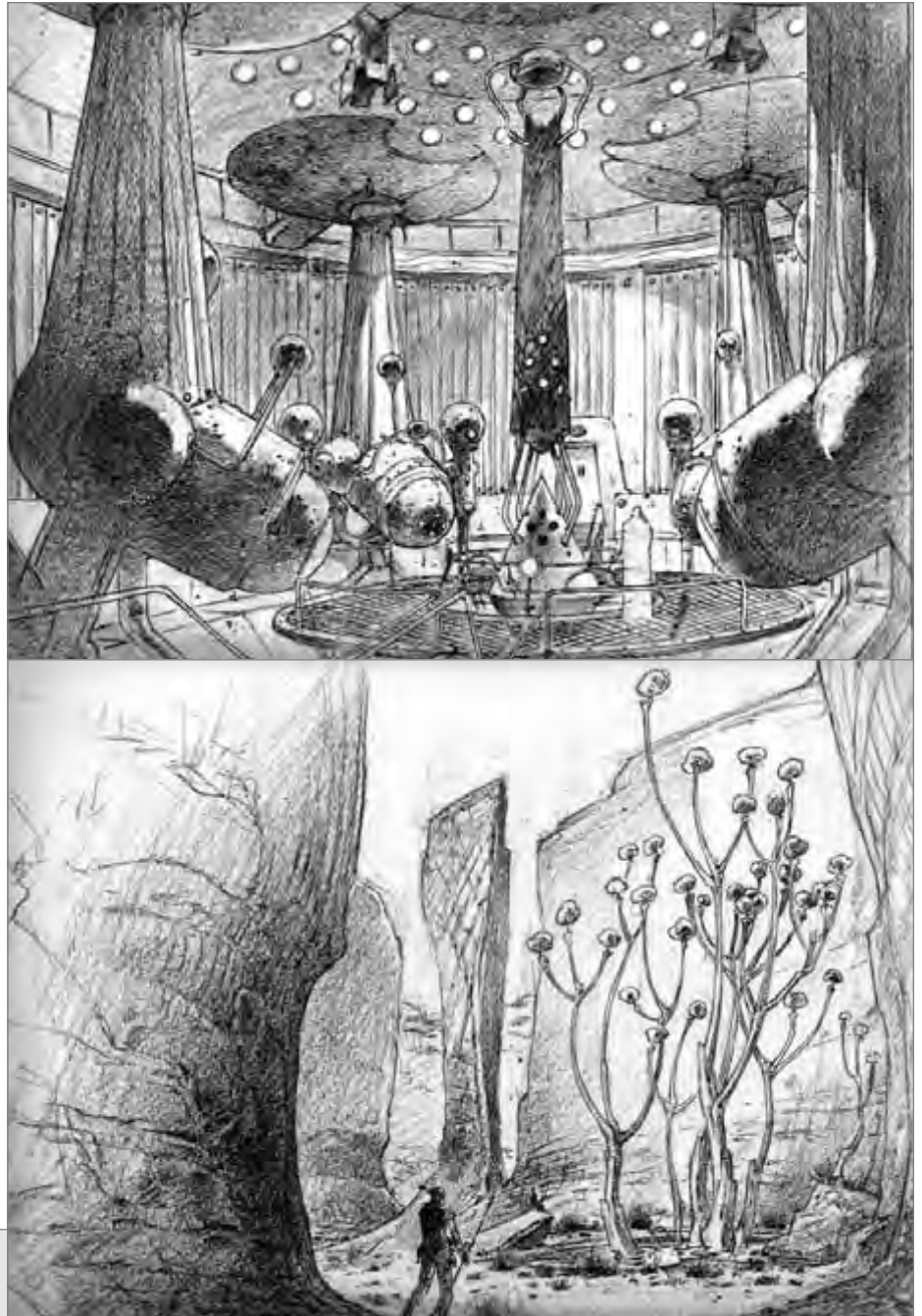
Stephan enjoys an intensely collaborative creative relationship with Rand, Ryan, and the other *Uru* designers that has produced Ages of uncommon beauty and complexity. “Rand would come to me and see what I’d like to do for the next Age. It was never limiting, and so I was always able to bring more to the picture.

“And interestingly enough, there was never a definite concept behind everything. The overarching story is so large that a lot of things can tie in together, and that made things even more exciting. Rand was giving me some initial ideas, and from that I was taking these ideas and putting my own ideas in during the design phase. Rand would see the design and get even more excited; he’d say, ‘Oh man, I can see potential right there, and what if, and what if, and what if...’ For me, it was very healthy, because it allowed for me as an artist to express myself and bring something to the table, as opposed to being told, ‘this is it, it has to go this way.’”

NO RULE

Stephan's first rule of creating an Age is that there is no rule. "For me, it's important that there is no rule because otherwise it becomes boring. In every Age, I tried to do something different from the one before, so that I would renew myself, and I get excited about doing it."

As an example, he discusses the creation of an unreleased Age: "Most of [that Age] is all pencil, because I had just done an Age that was all about Photoshop detailing, so I wanted—I needed—to feel the pencil again. So the whole Age was designed in pencil. Very, very few color paintings—when they were really necessary.



A pair of pencil concept sketches of the unreleased Ercana Age [art by Stephan Martiniere].



"And sometimes it's the reverse. Sometimes I start thinking in little thumbnails, but sometimes a visual kicks in and I see something right away. So it could become a painting right there. And if Rand likes the painting, it becomes the base for everything that's going to flow from there."

Stephan composes in a variety of media, as seen in this concept art for an unreleased rest Age [art by Stephan Martiniere].



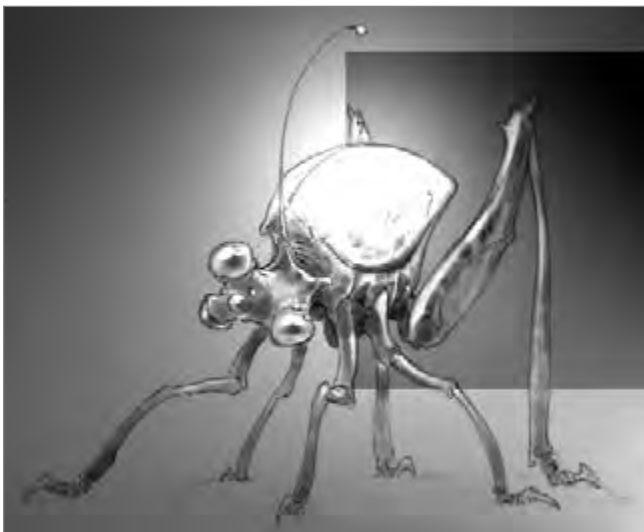
WORLDS WITHOUT END

Stephan's early love of European comics art instilled in him an appreciation for the role that environment can play in a story. "European comic books are very environment and story based, as opposed to American comics, which are more character based," he says. "So I grew up in an environment where I knew there was absolutely no limit as to what you could do as a comic book artist."

That aesthetic sensibility served him well when designing Ages for *Uru*, which often relies on subtle environmental clues to help the player solve puzzles and advance the story. "I've always come from that background," he says, "designing for a story, not designing for beauty. It appeals to me not only as an artist, but as a storyteller as well."

"The one thing that is so interesting to me about the whole overarching story, is that it's an excavation of a civilization and all of these worlds that they were creating. Suddenly that whole civilization died, and you're rediscovering things. You're talking about a civilization that split at one point and recreated itself in different points in space, each one with its own philosophical, social, and political drive."

"So that creates, in a sense, new societies, with new types of architecture. And because these worlds are being created by these writers, each one is going to have their own vision of how they see it. There is no restriction, there is no limit, everything is possible. When you start from that premise, it's endless. It's like you're talking about everything you can imagine. It's a world history. There is no end."



A pair of critters from the unreleased Negilahn Age: a two-tailed monkey and a six-legged spider.



KADISH TOLESA



One of Stephan's favorite Ages is Kadish Tolesa, an Age composed of impossibly tall trees that hide the vault of Kadish, a D'ni nobleman who fled the destruction of the city. Every aspect of the Kadish Tolesa's design ties into the story behind its existence. "We knew that this was the story of one guy who had to flee the destruction of his city," says Stephan. "He tried to bring with him all the riches that he could save, and in the end, he got trapped in his own fortress, his greed killing him."

This much of the story of Kadish Tolesa is obvious from Yeesha's speech at the end of that Age. But the subtle environmental details reveal hints of other story threads, including Kadish's incompetence as a writer. "I'm not exactly sure if I remember how the giant forest came in. I think I brought up the idea of the forest having become so big from [Kadish's] failed experiment, because he had to write the Age as well. The manner in which he wrote the Age was not complete, so the forest took over, he lost control of his creation, and that's what started destroying the whole estate."

"So when you get there, you don't see the estate anymore. You see the remains of it, and the whole forest becomes a huge labyrinth. When I was designing it, I was always thinking of *Citizen Kane*, so basically it's like Xanadu, but you really never see it."

A Kadish Tolesa concept painting (art by Stephan Martiniere).



This concept painting of Kadish Tolesa's "glow room" is dominated by iconic squares, spheres, and triangles (art by Stephan Martiniere).

THE POWER OF ICONOGRAPHY

As complex and intricate as many of the Ages of *Uru* are, they also have an efficiency to them, an economy of design. "I'm very much into giving a lot of symbolic information in my designs," says Stephan. "In the case of Kadish, you look at all the structures, and they're very simple, structural, and geometrical. You're talking about very pure and direct shapes, like squares and circles and things that are powerful in terms of civilization. It's like the *Star Wars* ideas. The X-wing and the Y-wing, these are shapes that nobody will forget, because they're so basic to start with—stars and circles."

The iconic shapes of many of *Uru's* structures and environments serve a more practical purpose as well, by helping the player remember where they have been and what they have seen. "Everything has to be, in some fashion, iconic, so that it's easy to remember. Otherwise you could create something that is very beautiful but so complex that [players] remember only an impression of it, not the essence of it."

A deeper reason for *Uru's* dependence upon strong iconography is the fact that the D'ni-written Ages must tell their story without benefit of spoken or written English. Stephan acknowledges that many gamers may not pay such close attention to *Uru's* structural symbolism, "but some might, and that's the whole idea," he says. "Some people will see things that others won't see and go deeper and start seeing shapes and symbols. That makes the whole thing even more exciting."



Uru's Eder Gira is visible in the distance of this concept sketch of an unreleased Age (art by Stephan Martiniere).

EDER GIRA

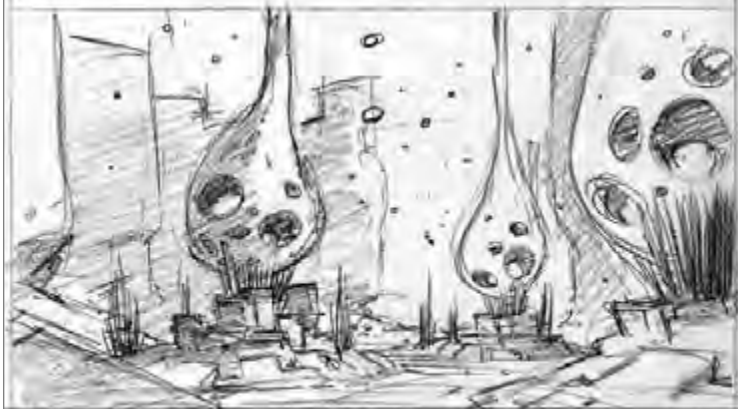
In contrast to Kadish Tolesa, which was meticulously plotted out and always considered a vital part of *Uru Prime's* story, the Age of Eder Gira started out as a simple technology demo. "When I jumped on the project, the basic structure was already there, and they were doing some testing with night and day. It was never necessarily supposed to make it, but the night and day experiment was successful, and they said, 'Well, we're there; let's make it an Age.'"

Before the Age could be included in the game, however, it needed stronger ties to the rest of the Ages and *Uru's* story. "At the time that they were doing this testing, I was working on a totally different Age that is going to be coming later. Rand saw some of the elements of the Age that I was working on and said, 'Hey wouldn't it be cool if we had that view being seen from a location from that garden?' And suddenly, things became linked."

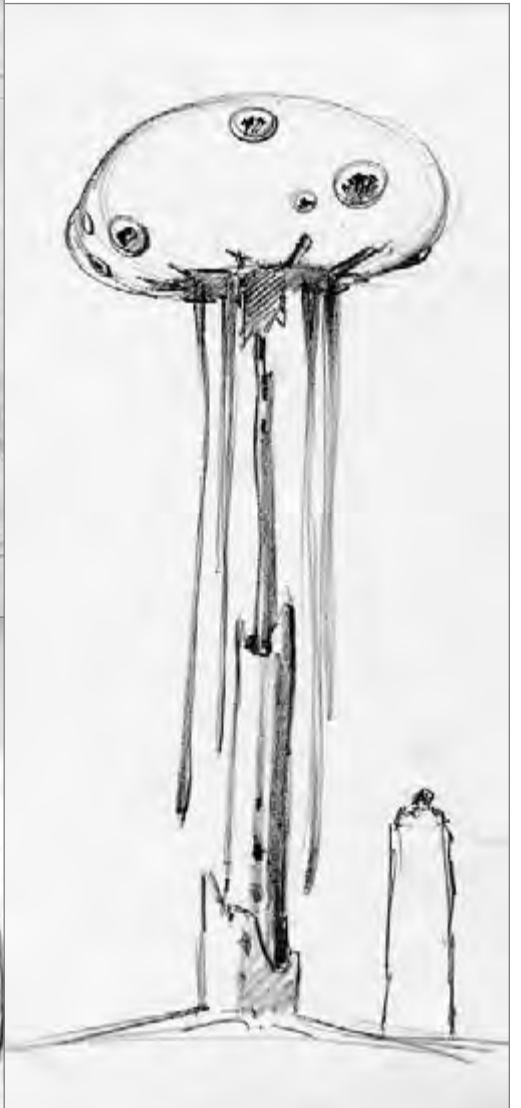
"So when it came time for me to add structure to that little environment, I had the architecture detailed for me, because it was what I already had designed for the other Age. And we already knew how the other Age was working, in terms of its own ecosystem, so I just had to translate that. It's an ongoing process where a lot of things are happening as they are being made, and they crisscross, and then at the end, they always tend to work—that's a fun part of it."



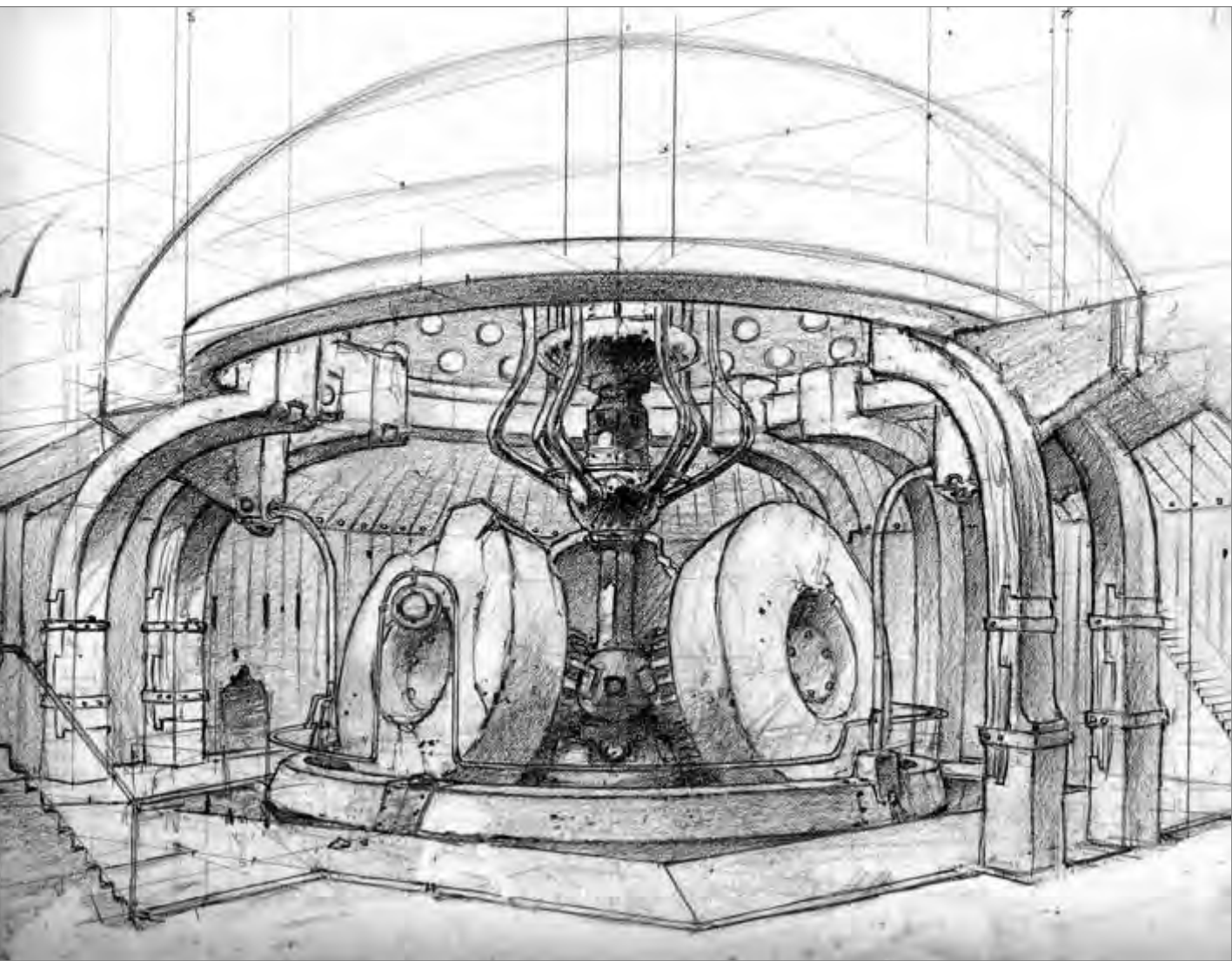
TRANSPARENT ROUNDED CORAL TYPE BUSHES & TREES



PLANTS W/ FIGHTING POWERS (PARTICLES)



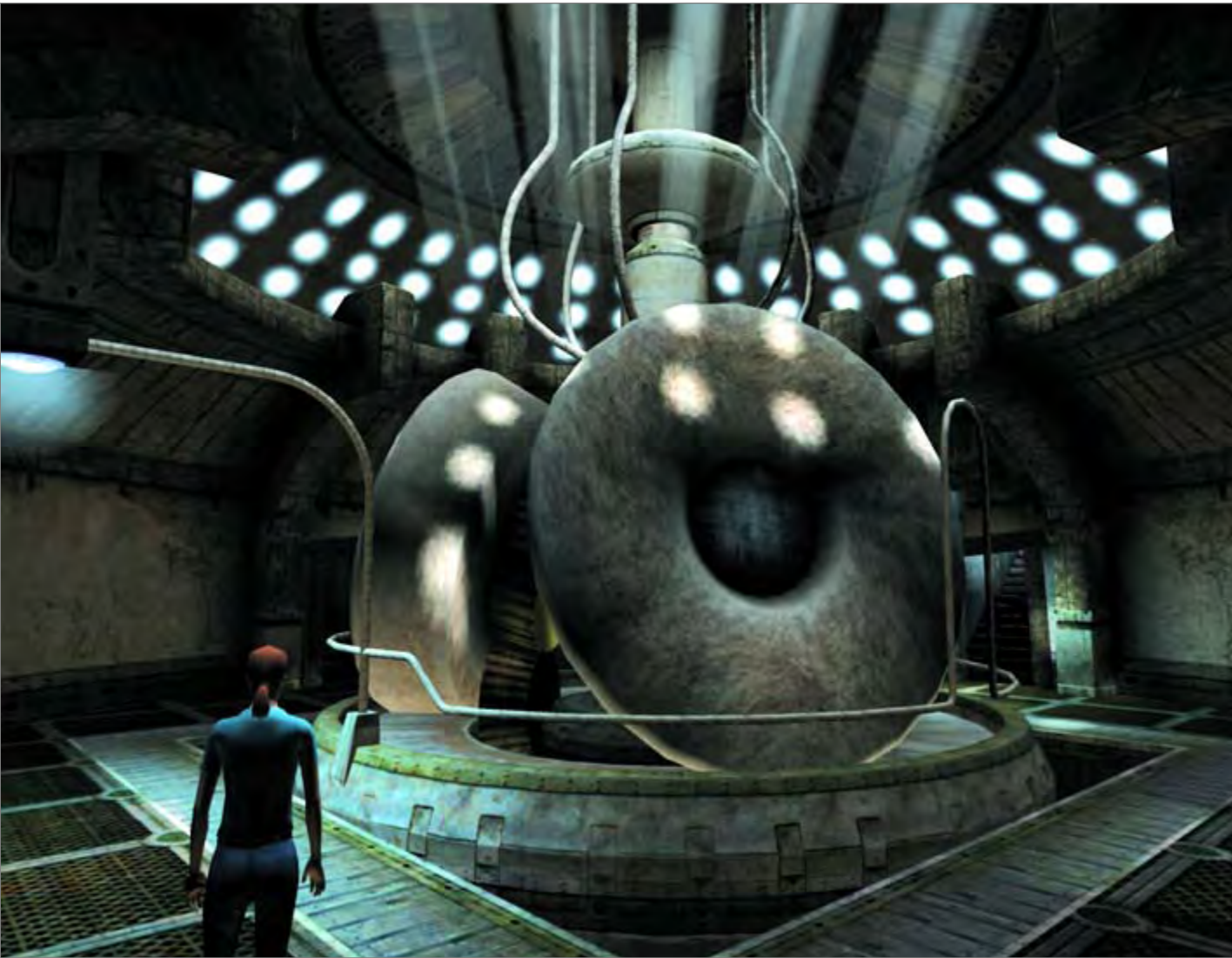
Pencil concept sketches of Eder Kemo's bizarre flora (art by Stephan Martiniere).



BLENDING ART AND SCIENCE

When asked if it was an intimidating challenge to work on a real-time adventure game that would be the first Cyan-developed title since *Riven*, Stephan replies, “A challenge, yes. Intimidating, no. My worry was more about the company being able to make the design happen, because I knew that the game was really where the limitation would have happened, not really at the design stage.”

That’s not to say that Stephan didn’t need to learn a few new tricks, however. Creating two-dimensional designs for what would eventually become three-dimensional worlds—a head-on collision between the art of painting and the science of programming—presented challenges that he had never dealt with before. “The challenge for me was to try to also understand the limitation of the game [engine] so that I was not creating things that were going to become a total nightmare. I would rather [know what the 3D artists can do] rather than find out that I gave them something very complex, and at the end have them say, ‘Well, we can’t do that. It’s not possible.’



Understanding how the 3D artists worked allowed Stephan to create feasible design concepts that played to *Uru*'s technical strengths. These images are of the unreleased Age, Ercana (concept art by Stephan Martiniere).



"So for me it was very exciting, actually, to learn the technical limitations. It also in some ways shaped what I was designing, to make sure that you can maximize what the technology is able to do, as opposed to killing it. I learned that it's better to do certain shapes than others, to block space, to configure areas so that you maximize the information you want ... little things, very technical. If I'm limited to ten polygons as opposed to one hundred, how can I make ten gorgeous, how can I make ten work and be as powerful as one hundred?"

This is perhaps the most practical reason for many of *Uru*'s symbolic structures—a simple design is easier for the game's 3D engine to render than a complicated design. Rather than see this as a limitation, Stephan saw it as an advantage. "It forces you to think very symbolically, and somehow it works with the game too, because it's very symbolic and primitive, and very iconic."



Uru's overarching aesthetic is symbolic, primitive, and iconic (art by Stephan Martiniere).



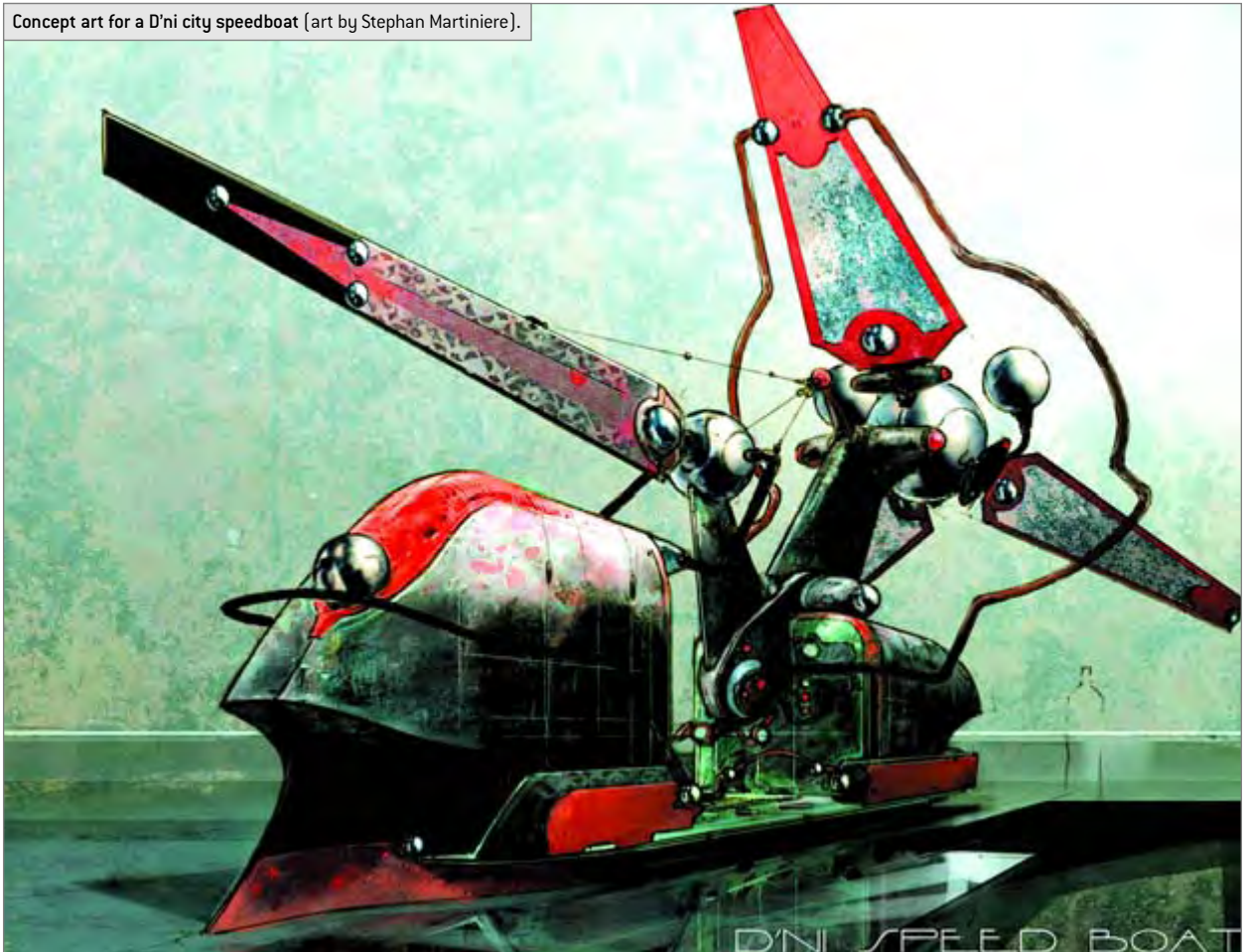
The Cyan team's openness and willingness to learn from each other helped prevent conflicts when it came to the difficult task of taking Stephan's paintings and turning them into 3D environments. "I think the most important thing for me was to create a very comfortable relationship [with the 3D artists], because I had as much to learn from these guys, if not more, than they had to learn from me. I was really the one looking at what they do and trying to learn how they work so I could understand their process.

"So it was a learning process for me, and because I'm still trying to find the time to create in 3D entirely, it was very important that I learn from all these guys. And I think I created a very healthy relationship. Also, I'm totally open to suggestions, and I think that empowers everybody. That's teamwork."

That said, as an artist, Stephan dreams of a future where he can bring his ideas to life in three dimensions without compromise. "We're thinking of things right now we'd like to see in terms of interactions with environments and creatures, and we know we have limitations that in several years we won't have, just in simple things like light and global illumination.

"It's just starting to happen very, very slowly, but you see it coming. You know, the more powerful the graphic cards become, the more detail and intricacy they're going to allow. And seeing that and how fast it goes, that's what makes it exciting."

Concept art for a D'ni city speedboat (art by Stephan Martiniere).



CHAPTER 19



BRINGING URU TO LIFE

FROM RIVEN TO URU

Making the transition from the prerendered, HyperCard world of *Riven* to the real-time, three-dimensional environments of *Uru* proved to be the Cyan team's greatest challenge. To fully appreciate the technical difficulties involved, it is necessary to understand how radically different the process of creating an *Uru* Age is as compared to creating a *Riven* Age.

REAL-TIME vs. PRERENDERED

All of *Riven's* environments were created by 3D artists using a program called SoftImage on state-of-the-art (for the time) Silicon Graphics Indigo workstations. After Cyan's concept artists produced a detailed storyboard sketch of a scene, the 3D artist defined the shapes of all of the scene's visible objects as wire-frame models consisting of hundreds of thousands of polygons, not unlike a sculptor working with clay.

Once the models were complete, the artist would overlay photorealistic textures on the modeled objects, "painting" them to give them the illusion of substance. Once the modeling and texturing was complete, the artist could render a single image of the incredibly detailed environment, a process that could take up to 45 minutes for each individual scene.

"We had servers that just rendered images 24 hours a day," says Josh Staub. "We called it 'feeding the beast.' It was a nightmare just trying to keep them generating these images.... I had my Macintosh at home, which I had set up so I could dial in to Cyan and check the servers. I live two minutes away, but the last thing I would do when I left work at the end of the day—which was usually around midnight—was check the servers. I would get home and the first thing I would do was check the servers again, just to make sure that while I was sleeping, we were going to be getting the most out of them."

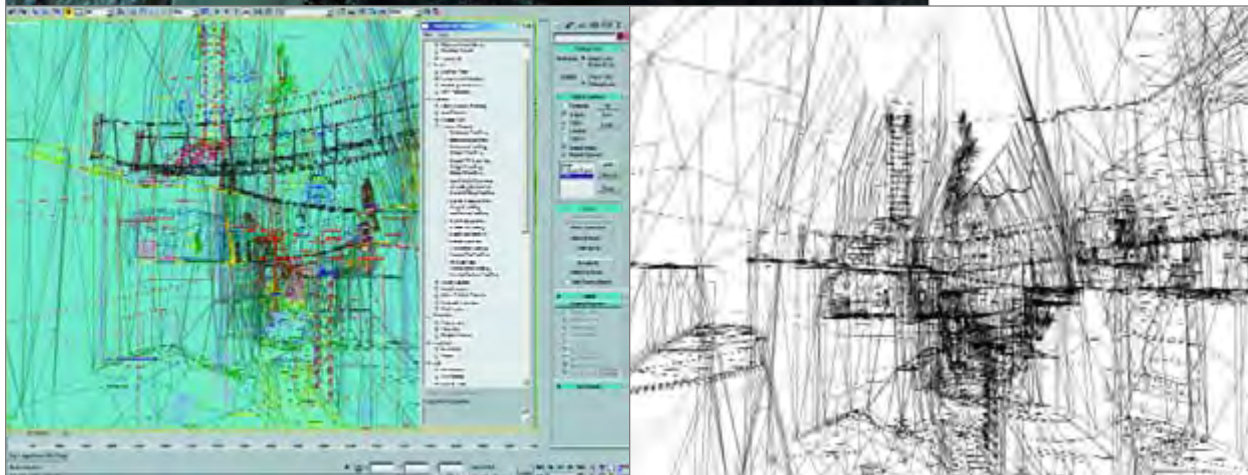
Once the scene was rendered, the 3D artist would take a high-resolution screenshot of it and import it into the game as one of *Riven's* 4,000 scenes. *Riven's* environments are described as "prerendered" because the player's computer doesn't actually render any of the 3D environments; it simply displays a static, two-dimensional image of the three-dimensional world from a fixed camera angle.



RENDERING IN REAL-TIME

In contrast, all of *Uru*'s environments are rendered in "real-time" 3D. Rendering in real-time means that the PC running *Uru* must be able to render and rerender the visible parts of the 3D environment dozens of times ("frames") per second in its memory. This allows the player to actually step into the three-dimensional scene and examine it from any angle the player's avatar can reach.

In a sense, the player's PC must be able to do everything that *Riven*'s SGI workstations had to do. But instead of having the luxury of rendering one or two images per hour, *Uru*'s 3D artists had to find a way to create environments that could be rendered and displayed at least 30 times per *second* on the player's PC.



Uru's 3D artists created three-dimensional models of the Ages in 3D Studio Max, textured the polygons, and exported them for use in the game engine.



One of Cyan's very first real-time 3D experiments—this round room was created in 1998.

ELEGANT SIMPLICITY

The more complex an environment—in terms of the number of polygons in the model and the size of the images used for the textures—the more memory and processing power is required to view and explore that environment. So, one of the first challenges the team faced was how to simplify the 3D models of the Ages without compromising the visual quality that *Myst* and *Riven* were known for.

“With *Riven*, we were more accustomed to [having] two or three million polygons on the screen and virtually limitless texture sizes,” says Josh. “It wasn’t that uncommon to have a texture that was 10 by 10 inches, or 20 by 20, or 30 by 30. We didn’t have to render it in real time.... And [for *Uru*] Rand is telling me that he wants to make a game that is going to have to render things 30, 40, 50 frames every second on somebody’s home machine. That is a huge jump.”

Initial technical tests conducted right after *Riven*’s 1997 release were not all that encouraging. “When we started, we were talking about textures that were 256 pixels by 256 pixels and scenes that had two or three thousand polygons on the screen,” says Josh, a far cry from *Riven*’s lush photorealistic Ages.



An assortment of textures used in Uru. Each of these was “wrapped” around a polygonal model to give it the illusion of photorealism.

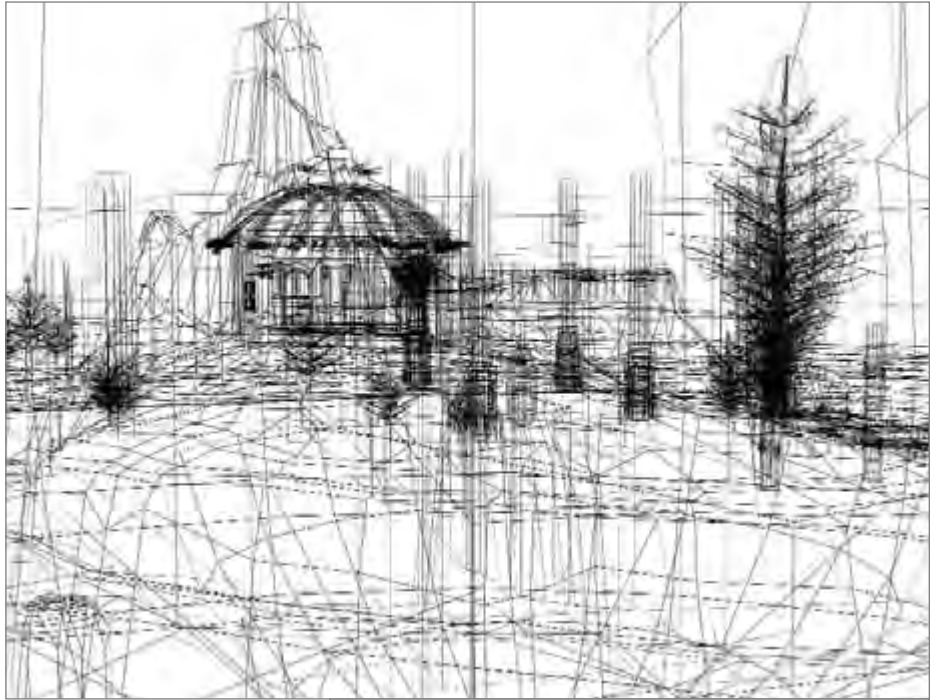
THE PLASMA ENGINE

Despite their enthusiasm for the project, things were looking a little overwhelming for the Cyan team until Brice Tebbs and Headspin Technologies entered the picture in 1999. Although it would undergo some major revisions during *Uru*'s development, their Plasma 3D game engine was a huge step in the direction of D'ni. "The first [Plasma] engine basically was us kind of feeling out how each other worked," says Josh. "A lot of it was them saying, 'Well, what do you want?' and us saying, 'Well, what can you do?'"

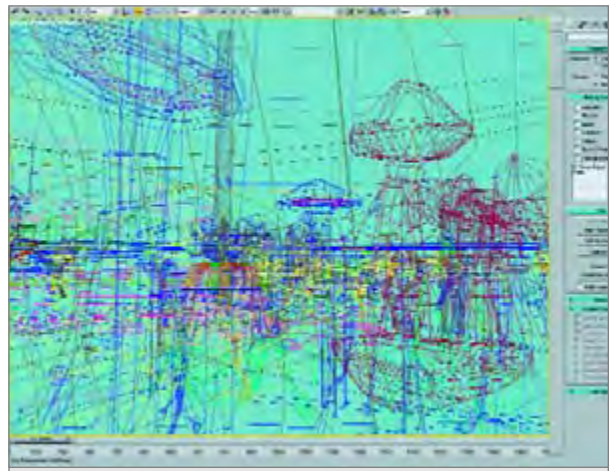
For a game as unique as *Uru*, Brice knew that the typical PC game development mentality wouldn't work. "At a lot of video game companies, you'll find the technical people are pretty dominant. The technical people make the engine, [present it to the artists, and] say, 'Here's what you can do.' And I think that here, our strategy is more trying to figure out how we can let [the artists] do whatever they want, to the greatest extent possible."

One of the big advantages that the Plasma engine gave the 3D artists was the ability to model an Age in Discreet's 3D Studio Max, export it to the Plasma engine, and instantly walk an avatar around in the Age with the game engine. This allowed the 3D artists the opportunity to instantly examine every detail of the Ages they had just worked on, giving them the chance to instantly check Ages for bugs or flaws.

"Today, to make a game really, really good, you have to have artists that are really, really talented, and that didn't used to be the case," says Brice. "So we were lucky that we worked with people who were coming from high-end photorealism and were trying to see what they could do down here in this real-time world. And we're still trying to reach the real-time stuff up to meet them."



A 3D Studio Max wire-frame model of the Relto personal Age.



This psychedelic plate of spaghetti is actually the untextured model of Teledahn. Thanks to the Plasma engine, *Uru*'s designers could export their 3D Studio Max models and instantly start walking an avatar around in them.



Several examples of the textures used for the many cave paintings and etchings, including a few that have not yet been seen in Uru (art by Stephan Martinieri).

REALMYST AND PLASMA 2

Although Headspin Technologies had a working version of the Plasma engine when they began their partnership with Cyan in 1999, the game engine underwent several major changes during the development of *Uru*. “It’s still called the Plasma engine,” says Josh, “but we all think of it as Plasma 2.”

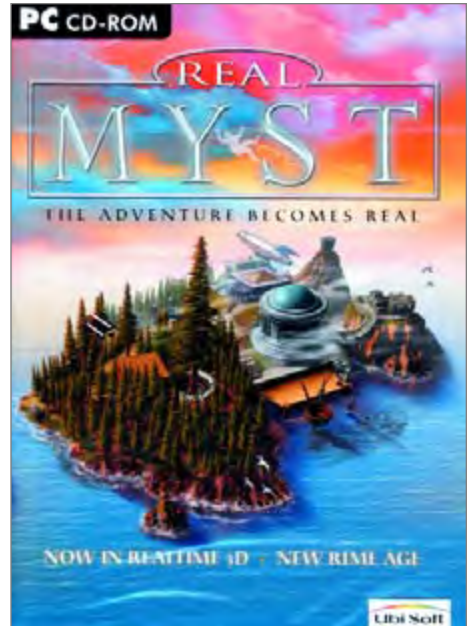
As the Cyan team was working on technical experiments for what was still called DIRT at the time, *Myst*’s Japanese publisher, Sunsoft, said that they would like to try using the Plasma engine to develop a real-time 3D version of *Myst*. “And I said, ‘No, I don’t want to,’” laughs Brice. “We eventually let them do that, and they worked on it for a while, but at some point [they reached a point where] they weren’t really going to be able to finish it. So we took it over and finished it here at Cyan.”

Although switching gears to work on the game that would eventually be known as *realMyst* was a distraction from *Uru*, it taught the team several valuable lessons. After *realMyst* was released, a great deal of the Plasma code was rewritten to optimize various aspects of its performance.

“One of the greatest compliments we’ve received [is the common assumption] that we’re using all kinds of crazy effects and that [gamers have] to have the absolutely newest video card,” says Josh. In reality, the majority of *Uru*’s lighting and texturing effects were “hand painted” by the artists themselves during the modeling of the Ages.

Brice concurs: “We’d have similar experiences where we’d demo the game and we’d get comments like, ‘Well, yeah, sure you’ve got all these cool pixel and vertex-shaders in there,’ and we’d say, ‘Well, actually, no. This is actually based on really old technology; we’re just doing our best to make it look good.’”

Finishing and shipping *realMyst* also showed many of the newer Cyan employees, who hadn’t been around for the release of *Riven*, just how much work went into releasing a PC game. “Any time you ship a product, you learn a lot that you’re never going to learn until you ship,” says Brice. “They got a lot of experience about what kind of things you wind up having to do at the end.”



Development of *realMYST* took time away from *Uru*’s creation but taught the team several important lessons about creating a real-time 3D game.



realMyst was Cyan’s first attempt at creating a full three-dimensional real-time game.



What a difference a few years can make. *realMyst's* 3D real-time graphics compare favorably with *Myst's* prerendered images.

NOTE

Minimum *Uru* Requirements:

Processor: Pentium III 800MHz

Video Card: 32MB 3D video card

RAM: 256MB

Hard Drive: 2GB

CD-ROM: 4x or faster

Despite *realMyst's* convoluted development cycle, the release of the game proved to the Cyan team and to *Myst* fans alike that it was possible to develop a real-time 3D adventure worthy of the franchise. "I would contend that *realMyst*, even in static imagery, looks as good as *Myst*," says Brice. "Now, you can argue [over] this picture or that picture, but in reality, there's a lot of stuff in *realMyst* that looks better than *Myst*, even though [*realMyst*] ran on a TNT [video] card. And a lot of that comes from the fact that the technology moves forward; no slam on Robyn and *Myst*, but the artist that did *realMyst* had better tools."

DOING MORE WITH LESS

"We definitely have a broad fan base, and we know that a lot of the people who play our games are not hardcore gamers," says Josh. "They're not going to go out and spend \$300 on a graphics card, and they're not going to spend \$3,000 on a sweet machine with tons of RAM. And so we wanted to make sure that we were still reaching those people and still getting those people to play." To that end, the Plasma engine was specifically designed so that, with a lot of extra elbow grease on the part of the 3D artists, *Uru* would ship with low system requirements and therefore be playable on a wider range of PCs.

"Four years ago, we were working on this game and we needed to make sure that it was going to run on machines back then," says Josh. "We've pushed the limit in every area, visually, to try to make it look as good as possible and yet still play well on machines that have been out for a couple years."

"The philosophy that we've taken in *Uru* is that there are some things that are different if you have a higher-end machine, but there's not very many of them," says Brice. "We want the base level to still be good without you having to have the latest hardware."

"We've done a lot of things with older technology and using the technology in a clever way, so that essentially the game looks the same on a GeForce2 card as it does on a GeForceFX card. As a consequence, we pay for it by running into all kinds of errors with drivers and so forth." But thanks to the extra work on the part of *Uru's* programmers, *Uru* is playable on the vast majority of PCs purchased in the last four years.

That's not to say that all of the kinks have been worked out, but Brice is confident that the Cyan team has done everything humanly possible to make *Uru* playable on the widest range of PCs possible. "It's very difficult these days, actually, to [estimate what kind of PC people have]," he says. "I actually game at home on a 500MHz, and the latest machines are 3GHz. There's a very wide range, and it's very difficult to make a game that can appeal to a wide audience. From a technical perspective, I'm always going, 'Man, I wish that was a little faster, or I wish that took up less RAM, I wish this, I wish that,' but overall, I think we succeeded in what we wanted to do."

THE GREAT LEAP FORWARD

As a result of *Uru*'s long development process, the Cyan team had to deal with and take advantage of a major leap forward in graphics card technology. With the advent of NVIDIA's GeForce, the processors on graphics cards were able to handle much more of the "heavy lifting" when it came to rendering 3D environments and displaying them onscreen. "In the old days, it was [a matter of] how cleverly could you use the software," says Brice. "Now, it's how cleverly can you use the hardware."

"We needed to make major changes to re-architect the engine to take advantage of the hardware and also to make the engine more suitable to the multiplayer environment. So that's what the differences were between Plasma 1 and Plasma 2: better support for graphics hardware and better support for multiplayer play."

Although the extensive modifications to the Plasma engine required a great deal of time and effort, the good news was that the art assets that had been modeled for use with the original Plasma engine were still usable on the new version. "We've actually kept a lot of the old assets and we've added to them, because we can," says Brice. "There was a version of Teledahn that ran on a 266MHz Pentium II, with a Voodoo2 card. It didn't look as good as the one you have today, but it looked a lot like that one."

"EVERYTHING IS HANDMADE"

Although advances in technology helped make it possible for Cyan to develop a real-time 3D adventure that could live up to the *Myst* name, some aspects of the development process couldn't be simplified by a new generation of graphics cards. If the creativity of *Uru*'s programmers didn't match the inspiration of its artists, the project would have been doomed.

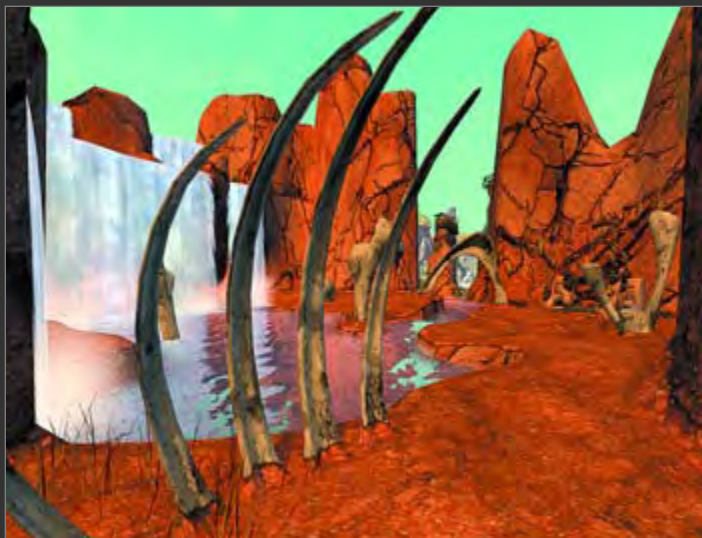
Fortunately, everyone at Cyan understood exactly what was expected of them, and Brice and the former Headspinners were no exception: "There are a lot of games where people just sort of use the hardware in a pretty generic way, and what that gets you is a lot of games that kind of look alike.... In *Uru*, no two things are the same. No two switches, no two things work exactly the same, and trying to manage all of the complexity of everything being a little bit different than every other thing is one of the most challenging issues. It's like everything we have is handmade. That makes it hard, but that's also what makes it compelling."

Josh leads a production team of eight artists, including himself, each of whom has worked at Cyan for at least two or three years. He credits much of *Uru*'s quality to having a stable and experienced team of 3D artists. "We stress a lot of little things," says Josh. "We're very nitpicky, and the artists understand that. They understand that every little thing is going to be pointed out that needs to be fixed, and I think that we've been able to achieve a really high level of quality."

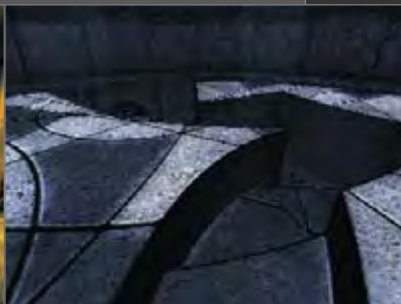
Brice is similarly proud of his team of programmers, who could handle a variety of technical issues without supervision, allowing him to focus on larger aspects of game design. "Maybe the biggest challenge for me and Rand has always been [answering the question]: What are we making?" he says. "We had no road to follow. If you're the people making *Dark Age of Camelot*, well you just do whatever *EverQuest* did except for the things you want to change. And we didn't really have a road map, so we just spent a lot of time exploring all kinds of options about how this was going to work."



Each of these "brain trees" is a separate model. Cutting and pasting is an *Uru* design no-no.



*Uru's first-person perspective was a late addition to the game at the demand of the *Myst* fan base.*



GAINING SOME PERSPECTIVE

During *Uru's* development, many longtime *Myst* fans who beta-tested the game lamented the absence of the first-person perspective that was present in every other *Myst* game. Bowing to the demands of the fan base, Cyan added the option of a first-person perspective, which created a number of headaches for the 3D artists.

"This game was designed to be a third-person game," says Josh. "A lot of the things that we try to do to make the world look as good as it looks [are] smoke and mirrors. [Sometimes], in first person, that stuff is revealed. Most of the visual bugs that we had at the end were submitted because [the testers] were playing in first person. We had to basically make the decision, Can you play this game in first person? It's amazing how late that actually happened in the process.

"We had to make certain compromises with the first person, so sometimes we had to take you out of first person because of the way the gameplay works. Sometimes you need to see what your player is doing, and we don't necessarily want to show your face right up against a wall [while you're riding in an] elevator.

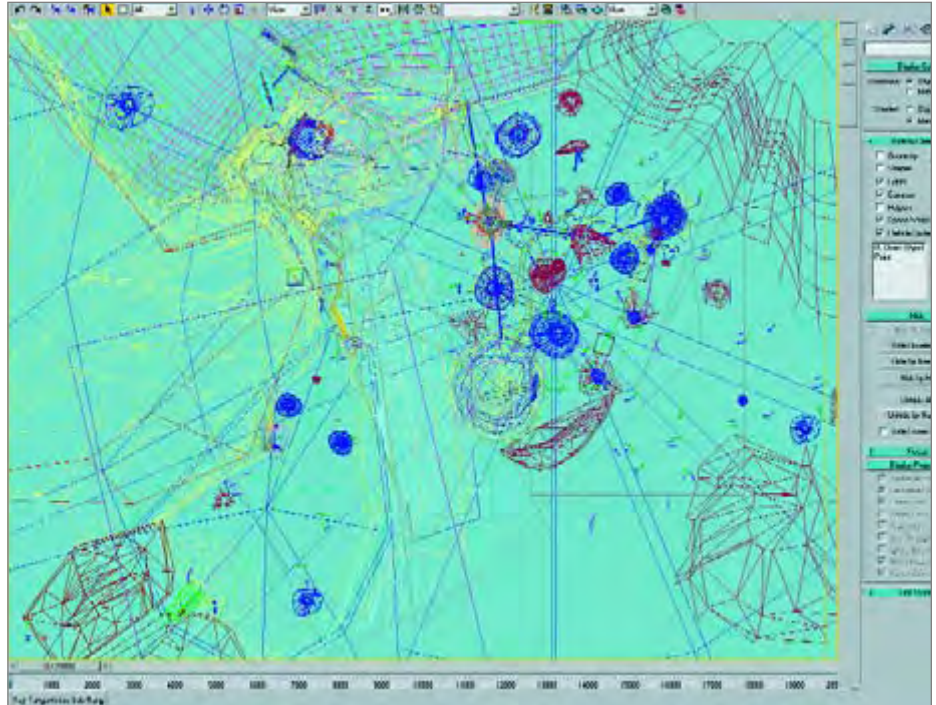
"It's been good for me to watch people play in first person, because I think the game holds up better than I expected. We did a lot of things to make sure that nothing falls apart in first person. When we had over-the-shoulder testing here, I saw the first group of people that played first person—I was shaking the whole time, probably. But, you know, the game does hold up really well. I think I'd probably play the game 90 percent in third person, but there are times when I think a first-person perspective is helpful."

BRINGING WORLDS TO LIFE

The Cyan team used Discreet's 3D Studio Max exclusively for all of the 3D modeling and texturing in *Uru*. The Studio Max modeling utilities and tools offered a great deal of flexibility in designing the Ages of *Uru*, and if there was something that Studio Max couldn't do, Brice and the Plasma programming team created a proprietary utility to make it possible. The result is an extremely versatile game that is capable of creating richly detailed environments without requiring the latest and greatest hardware to play it.

Of course, all of the technological tricks in the world would be worthless without a talented team of artists to use them, and *Uru*'s 3D artists needed to develop a unique combination of skills to achieve the desired results. "I personally don't like an assembly-line kind of approach to creating games," says Josh. "Most companies do this, where one guy models, one guy textures, and one guy animates. When we're looking for artists, we're definitely looking for people who have a wide range of skills. They need to understand that they are going to be setting up the cameras; they're going to be doing the modeling, texturing, lighting; they're going to be doing collisions for the character to bump into; they're going to be doing some of the wiring, setting up levers, plugging in animations; they're going to be doing a lot of stuff, and I think that brings a certain amount of ownership and responsibility to the artist.

"Everybody has worked at least to some degree in each Age, but I think each artist understands that they have an area that is their responsibility. I think that's important, so that you have somebody to go to if something doesn't work. I know who to assign that to, and I just personally think that's the right way to do it."



Take Josh's word for it: This wire-frame top-down view of Teledahn includes collision zones, cameras, wired levers, and many other intricate technical details.

LIGHTS! CAMERA! ACTION!

Uru's 3D artists didn't just have to model and texture the game's Ages; they also had to define all the various camera angles that would be triggered by the player's movement through the Age. "For every camera in the world, there's all kinds of information that it needs to have," says Josh. "It needs to know if it's going to be looking at the player, if it's going to track the player, where on the player is it going to track ... how much is the camera going to pan, how much will the player be able to move the camera around? What's the track speed of the camera, from the previous camera—when it goes from camera A to camera B, how fast does that happen, and how much does it decelerate when it reaches the next camera? Does it track from that camera or does it cut from that camera?"

"All of those things are set up by the artists, so I definitely ask a lot of them, and they're incredibly talented. Everybody that we have here has been here long enough to understand the rules. This is what we're shooting for and this is your responsibility."

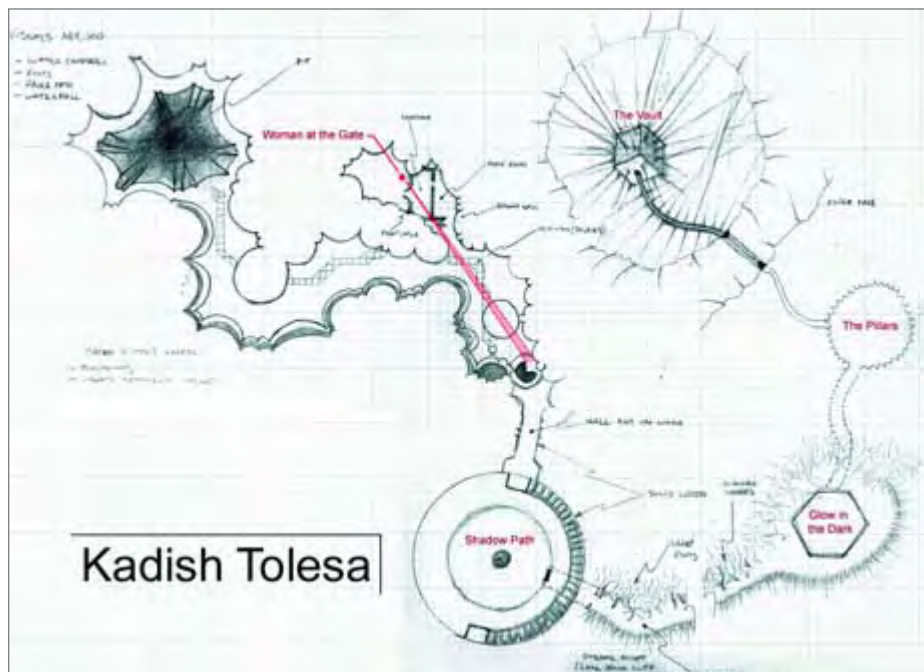


This more open approach to the 3D modeling is a marked contrast to the more rigid structure that Cyan worked under during *Riven*. “With *Riven*, we designed the gameplay at the very beginning for the whole game,” says Josh. “And then there was a lot of design work done, and design work at that point was a very detailed sketch of an object. That would be given to [a 3D] artist and that person would work on that object. All those things were funneled to a couple people, [who would] put all this stuff together [in] the room that they had built.”

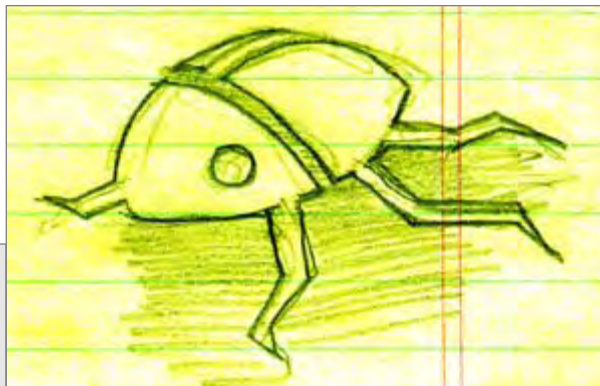
“It’s a different process now. Usually, we have a handful of sketches that give an overview of the area and a feel for the space. But the creation of the rooms, the objects, the lighting, and the color palette—[while] there may be elements of that in the design sketches, a lot of that stuff is handled after they hand-off to the production staff.

“The [3D] artist will basically be presented with the gameplay in the area and usually

[an annotated] top-down map, and then it’s the job of the artist and myself [to model it]. So the artist also has more of a responsibility to come up with ideas and solutions to problems.” And as opposed to *Riven*’s painstakingly detailed concept sketches, “a lot of it is chicken scratch written on the back of a yellow pad—how are we going to solve this problem, this wasn’t thought of, we didn’t think about this. It’s fairly chaotic at that point, but Cyan is very—for better or for worse—flexible during the process. The artists that we have are really talented and they understand the level of quality, and they understand that what we’re striving for is something really, really great.”



An example of the top-down maps that the 3D artists used to model the Ages in 3D Studio Max.



Due to the ease of use of 3D Studio Max, many of *Uru*’s concept sketches were “chicken scratch[es] written on the back of a yellow pad,” according to Josh (art by Austin Thomas).

LEAPING TECHNICAL HURDLES

To get the most out of the Plasma engine's performance, *Uru*'s artists had to learn a variety of technical tricks to prevent the game from over-taxing the player's PC and causing a slowdown or a crash.

One of the most basic techniques, used most effectively in *Uru*'s outdoor Ages, is to segment the Age so that the player can't see two extremely complex areas at the same time. Because the player's PC has to render and display only the areas of an Age that the player's avatar can "see," the strategic placement of mountains in Teledahn or trees in Kadish Tolesa can prevent a crippling overload of visual data that could negatively impact the player's experience. Each Age created design challenges as unique as the Age itself.



Creative use of stone pillars and tall mushrooms in Teledahn block the player's line of sight and prevent their PC from having to render unnecessary areas in the distance.

THE DESERT AND CLEFT

"People might think that making a desert would be a really easy thing," says Josh. "I mean, it's just a desert, there's nothing out there." The reality of modeling the desert Cleft area, where *Uru* begins and ends, was exactly the opposite.

"A desert is incredibly complex," he says. "It's more like a forest, except it's the kind of forest that you can just see forever. And we've got this fence line, and we've got the fence posts, and we've got all this stuff, and you can see it from wherever you are."

A visit to Carlsbad Caverns National Park in New Mexico gave the *Uru* team some excellent photo reference for how the desert Cleft should look.





It was a huge technical challenge to be able to render the New Mexico desert realistically, and since it was the first environment the player would see upon starting *Uru*, it had to be perfect. “We wanted to make sure that when people are dropped into this world, immediately they think, ‘Hey, this looks good; this looks like what I’m used to seeing from Cyan,’” says Josh.

Rendering the same desert at the end of the game was even more of a challenge, thanks to the thunderstorm that Yeesha unleashes above it. “We’re going to have this storm, and we’re going to have flowers and we’re going to have lightning and—it’s just crazy,” says Josh. “We just threw everything at it.”

“That’s one of the examples of the areas where, if you’re playing on a lower-end machine, and you want to run it at a high frame-rate, you can choose to play at less than ultra quality and you’ll get fewer bushes, fewer weeds, fewer rocks, but you’re not really missing out on the experience. Visually, I think it still looks really good; it’s just that if you’re playing in ultra [quality], you get more of those things.”

Photo reference of the New Mexico desert used in *Uru*. “It’s the kind of forest that you can just see forever,” says Josh Staub.

TELEDAHN

The fungal Age of Teledahn was an Age that only got larger and more complex with time. As one of the first Ages that the *Uru* team experimented with, it served as a testing ground of sorts for how complex they could make an Age. “Teledahn is specifically close to my heart,” says Josh. “We started that when it was just a couple of us working on it, basically designing it by the seat of our pants.

“Initially, Teledahn was a smaller Age, but that area has just grown and grown. Even though it was the first really large Age that we created, it’s still my favorite, as far as how it looks visually. A lot of those textures are the smaller textures. That was four years ago, five years ago, when [we were] trying to set the quality level and not knowing how far we could push things; that’s where we were at, at that point.”



Three screenshots of Teledahn as it appeared in 1999. The fact that the Age could be rendered in real-time 3D in this kind of detail is a technological miracle.





THE FRY-MAN AQUARIUM

The Fry-Man Aquarium in Douglas Sharper's Teledahn office, which holds the secret Linking Book to Sharper's D'ni office, has a triangular hole cut right through the center of the tank. Although it looks like an example of D'ni physics at work, it's actually based on an aquarium designed by Cyan's own Tony Fryman.



Tony Fryman, inventor of the Fry-Man Aquarium.



The Fry-Man Aquarium can be found in Douglas Sharper's Teledahn office in Uru and in Cyan's own studios.

The aquarium is the result of an experiment with Boyle's Law, which states that if you reduce the pressure on top of a liquid in a container, the liquid will rise to fill that space. Tony's aquarium has a triangular hole running straight through the center of it. The upside-down "V" of the triangular hole's "legs" are solid panes of glass that extend an inch or so beyond its base, which is open to the air.

A pump underneath the tank fills the aquarium with water, while air is evacuated through an open seal at the top of the tank. As the water rises up to the base of the triangular hole, the extended legs of the triangle act as a seal to keep the water from rising up through the open base of the triangle. The water then continues to fill the remainder of the tank, leaving a triangular column of air in the center of the tank. As long as the top of the tank is sealed, air can't be introduced to that space, and the water will maintain its position.

Tony added a fish to the aquarium to see if it would behave differently in the unique environment. Aside from learning to go to the bottom of the triangular hole for food, "it made no difference to him at all," says Tony, "but what I learned out of that was, they're nasty little creatures." This began an experiment in filtration, to see if he could modify the aquarium so that it was capable of supporting aquatic life.

Unlike a normal aquarium, Tony's had to be airtight at the top, so the usual aquarium filtering apparatus wasn't practical. Tony added a pump below the tank that constantly pumps water into the tank. A tube in the center of the tank sends overflowing water down through a filter under the tank, where the water is oxygenated, heated, and pumped back up into the tank.

The entire filtration system is hidden in the aquarium's base, which he added after a minor disaster in Dallas. "I took a trip, came back, and all the water was gone [from the tank], and the apartment underneath me was flooded," says Tony. "Unfortunately for the management, they thought the sliding doors going to the patios were leaking, so they came and replaced them all!" That was when he added a base to the aquarium that could hold all of the water from the tank above it, should the seal be compromised.

As soon as Rand Miller saw the aquarium, he commissioned Tony to build one for him, and it currently sits in one of Cyan's two development studios, with an Atrus action figure at the bottom of it!



A triangular hole runs through the center of the tank. The "legs" of the triangle are plates of plastic, and the bottom of the triangle is open to the air.



An Atrus action figure stands at the bottom of the tank. Guess he should have looked before he linked....

GAHREESEN

The prison Age of Gahreesen was quite possibly the most technically demanding Age the *Uru* team created. Two enormous rotating structures dominate the Age, and getting the physics of the Age to behave properly was one of the trickiest bits of programming in the entire game.

"It seems simple," says Josh. "You have your guy, and you move the floor underneath him. The first thing that you might think is that the guy is going to rotate with the floor, but what in fact happens is that the player just stands there and everything rotates [around him]." That's because the physical laws that would root a person to a rotating floor in the real world don't apply in a virtual world unless you find a way to incorporate them into the game engine."

"So then you might think, well, once I can get the platform to rotate, then everything's solved," continues Josh. "No, the only thing that's gotten you is, now the player moves, but they're still sort of sliding on this glass plane. They're not rotating; they don't rotate with the top." That means that, as the platform rotates, the player will move with the platform, but they won't realistically turn as the platform rotates, which makes it look as if the player is slowly spinning in a circle.

"[So then we had to say], OK, now when we rotate everything, the player needs to rotate with the top," says Josh. "And, oh, by the way, the player can run around, and they can jump, and they can do all these other things, and it needs to look like they are running around and jumping on this moving object."

The technology team eventually solved the problem by designating areas of Gahreesen as "subworlds," where different physics applied. "Basically," says Josh, "the [game] engine tells you that you are sort of attached to this object, and even though it's rotating, it doesn't consider itself to be rotating, so you're on this static object, but it is in fact rotating. Then it becomes trickier when you have to leave an object that is a subworld and jump onto an object that is no longer a part of the subworld, and then from there you need to jump on another subworld, because then the other building is rotating."

Sound confusing? It is. Josh tries to break it down further: "When you are inside the well [the first structure at the start of the Age], nothing is rotating except the [exterior] wall [of the structure] and the little niche that you get into [to reach the power room], but everything else is static.

"Then when you get on the roof [of the first building], the roof is rotating, and the other building is rotating. When you actually go [inside] the training center [in the second building], none of that stuff is rotating. But when you get to the roof of the training center, the veranda is not rotating, but the world is rotating around you, to make it look like you're rotating; so the entire forest and the waterfalls and everything, that's all rotating around the veranda.

"As much as possible, we needed to make it so that what the player was on was static. The two cases we couldn't do that were when you're [on the roof of the first building], and when you're in the niche and you're taking it around and around the building [to reach the power room].

"It took a lot of work by the engine guys to come up with a way that you could be on a rotating object. It was a huge nightmare, and I think if we were to do it all over again, I think there would be some of us that would pretty much demand from the design team that [Gahreesen] was not going to be that way."



Although Gahreesen is one of *Uru*'s most memorable Ages, the technical problems that accompanied it almost drove its programmers insane.







BEHIND THE SCENES OF GAHREESEN

Uru's programmers had to jump through many hoops to create Gahreesen, an Age composed of two enormous rotating buildings. Here's what's actually happening as you progress through the Age.

1



When you first arrive in Gahreesen, the entire structure is standing still, and the wall surrounding it is rotating.

2



When you reach the roof of the first building, the roof is rotating, as is the entire second building.

3



Inside the training center in the second building, nothing rotates. It doesn't need to, because you can't see the outside world.

4



When you reach the roof of the training center, however, the entire outside world rotates around you, to create the illusion that the training center is rotating.

AH, ME PUBLIC

There's no doubt that Josh and Brice both feel as if developing *Uru* has been an incredible personal and professional achievement, but both of them also hope that *Uru* is taken seriously by the gaming public. "I think when *Myst* was released, the hardcore gamers embraced it and saw it as something new and different and cool, and I think they were the ones who first latched on to it. And then the popularity grew until we had 60-, 70-year-old grandmothers and 6-year-old girls playing *Myst*. I think at some point, the hardcore gamers looked at it and thought, 'Well, that doesn't seem nearly as cool anymore now that everybody's playing it!'"

"And so, with *Riven*, I think that was an excuse for a lot of hardcore gamers to say that we were sort of living in the past. It still used a HyperCard, point-and-click type of interface. But from the art side, I certainly felt like we pushed the limit as far as what we could do visually, and we had the best technology available at the time. We had huge textures and tons of polygons, and we just pushed it to our limit.

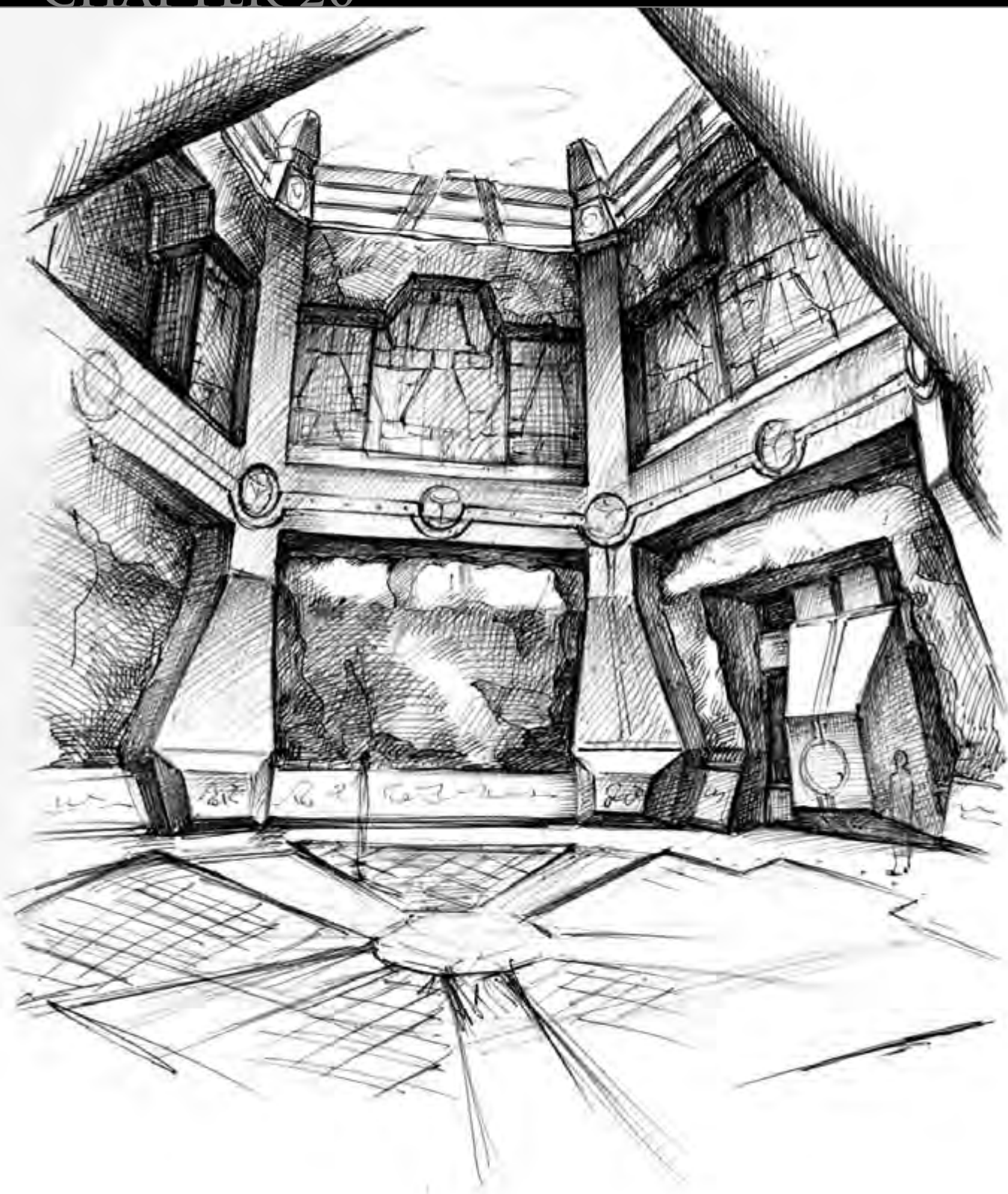
"But I think with *Uru*, hopefully we'll appeal to not just the people who loved *Myst* and *Riven*, but to the gaming community again. I think what we're doing is new and is different, just the game itself is played in a different way—it is third person, it's very dynamic, the worlds are incredibly immersive, and visually our target was *Riven*. We had to push the visuals as high as we possibly could, using all the techniques we'd developed over the years, and [that] allowed us to create really immersive worlds."

Brice believes that *Uru's* immersive quality puts it head and shoulders above *Riven* in terms of a pure game-playing experience. *Uru* might not have *Riven's* four-million polygon scenes and 900-square-inch textures, but the immersive quality of the dynamic environment and audio more than makes up for that. "It's just a different style. The fact that it's completely immersive and live when you're playing it, I think overall you come away from it [with a stronger impression]. The game itself doesn't have to be all that complex, because there's sort of a value to the fact that the environments are just so interesting. You don't want a complicated game experience to get in your way. Simple is good. People asked [during *Myst* and *Riven*], 'What did you do to attract females?' Well, we didn't do anything to attract them. We just didn't do anything to piss them off."

Brice also believes that *Uru* attracts a unique type of gamer. "I talked to a lot of our beta testers that we had here for about a year and a half. And what's fascinating is the kind of fan that we attract. They're very sort of verbal, literate people. And these guys are kids—they're 15 years old, 16 years old—and they're incredibly articulate. It's much better than the average 15-year-old *Counter-Strike* fan," he laughs. "It made it a real satisfying experience to work with the fans, because they're into it."



CHAPTER 20



THE SOUND OF URU

SCORING URU

Although the video game industry tends to dwell on the visual aspects of a game, the accompanying audio can exert a powerful influence on the player. Fortunately for Cyan, *Uru*'s soundtrack was in the capable hands of its Audio Director, Tim Larkin, one of the few Cyan employees to work on both *Riven* and *Uru*. An employee of Broderbund Software in the mid-1990s, Tim served as Lead Sound Designer on *Riven* before going to work for Sierra Online when Broderbund dissolved. At Sierra's Yosemite Entertainment studio, Tim was a Sound Designer for J.R.R. Tolkien's *Middle-Earth* until Sierra Online also went under and the Yosemite studio was closed.

What might have seemed to be a professional setback wound up perfectly positioning Tim for a return to Cyan, where *Uru* was in the early "DIRT" stages of development. "I remember when I came up here," says Tim. "I went out to lunch with Rand [Miller], and he said, 'You know, I don't have to do this. I could retire today if I wanted to. But you know what? I want to do it, because it's really cool!'"

Rand's enthusiasm for the project was infectious, and it just so happened that he and Tim were on exactly the same page. "I've been a composer for a long time," says Tim. "There's no place I'd rather be than writing music for these games. [Cyan] is one of the premier companies in the industry, and the way that this company works and how it was founded, well, that's the kind of environment that I think most of us here want to be in."

"I've been a composer for a long time. There's no place I'd rather be than writing music for these games."



Uru's Audio Director, Tim Larkin, was one of the few Cyan employees to work on both *Uru* and *Riven*.





TECH TALK

Tim's recording studio features a slew of samplers and keyboards—a Roland XV5080, two Roland JV1080s, a Roland JD990, two Kurtzweil samplers, and a PC running Tascam's GigaStudio—all of which are used to capture and/or play back synthesized instruments or audio samples. MOTU's Digital Performer allows Tim to sequence MIDI compositions on a Macintosh, and Digidesign's ProTools for the Macintosh is where he does all of his sound design and arrangement.



Uru's audio duties are divided between Tim, who composed the entire score for the game and developed *Uru's* audio aesthetic, and *Uru's* Sound Designer, Christopher Clanin, who implemented the sound in the game.

When it came to scoring *Uru*, Tim used Robyn Miller's *Riven* soundtrack as a departure point. "*Uru* takes place in a different time [than *Riven*]," says Tim. "It takes place today, it starts out on the Earth, in the southern New Mexico desert, it's not a totally different time-continuum type of thing, so there's a lot more freedom, as a result, in the music score. You can create contemporary sounds along with the ambient, mystical type of score.

"When Rand and I first started talking about this, one of the things that was important to both of us was to do something that was different. We didn't want to just go down the same path as *Myst*, *Riven*, or any other game. He allowed me the total freedom, basically, to compose the music that I like to compose, as well as what fits with the game."

Tim began designing the score for each Age by studying its concept art and basic 3D models, which allowed him to develop a feel for the environment. He also spent a good deal of time with his colleagues in an attempt to get their perspectives on the feel of the Age: "I'll hang around Stephan [Martiniere, *Uru's* Visual Design Director] and ask him a lot of questions about what's coming up and what he's doing conceptually," he says. "Also, [I like to know] if there's any story that's involved, or if there's any sort of thematic stuff that I need to deal with."

The diversity of *Uru's* Ages gave Tim a refreshing degree of freedom when it came to the composition of the score. "There are so many different Ages, and it's so diverse, [that] there's no one certain, set type of music that I have to write for any one particular Age. It's not like this has to flow from one Age to another, because they're sort of disconnected, in a sense. A different writer could've written [each] Age, and therefore [they] can have a totally different feel in the music and sound design."

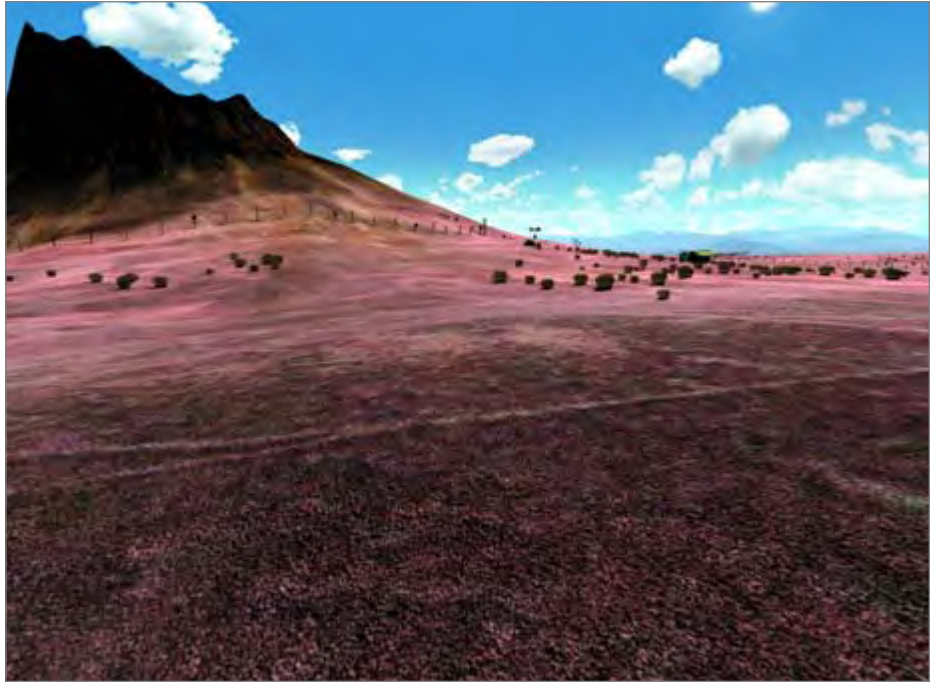
THE ROLE OF THE SCORE

Unlike those in many other video games, *Uru*'s soundtrack isn't simply a collection of songs that play in the background while the player explores the game world. In fact, much of *Uru*'s unconventional score might not be immediately recognizable as music at all. "Sometimes there's a fine line between doing music and sound design," he says. "[Sometimes] the ambience is not always necessarily really musical, but it contains musical elements, and the same is true of sound design, where you may have elements that aren't musical, but they sort of take on the same sort of function as musical elements. I don't think there are any other soundtracks [like *Uru*'s], to be totally honest with you."

Redefining the traditional role of the video game soundtrack was one of Tim's top priorities. "The challenge for me was to allow the ambience to sort of create its own feel, and not obstruct that with the music, and also make the music seem like it's not just coming out of nowhere for the sake of being there.

"I think that, in some places, [the score is] designed specifically to underscore the feel for an area, to intensify the feeling that the visuals give you. However, in other cases, I think there are times when it's okay to divert your attention to the music. A lot of people say a composer has done his job if you don't notice the music; I disagree with that. I think that at times, it's part of the experience and that you should immerse the player or the listener in the music as well as the game."

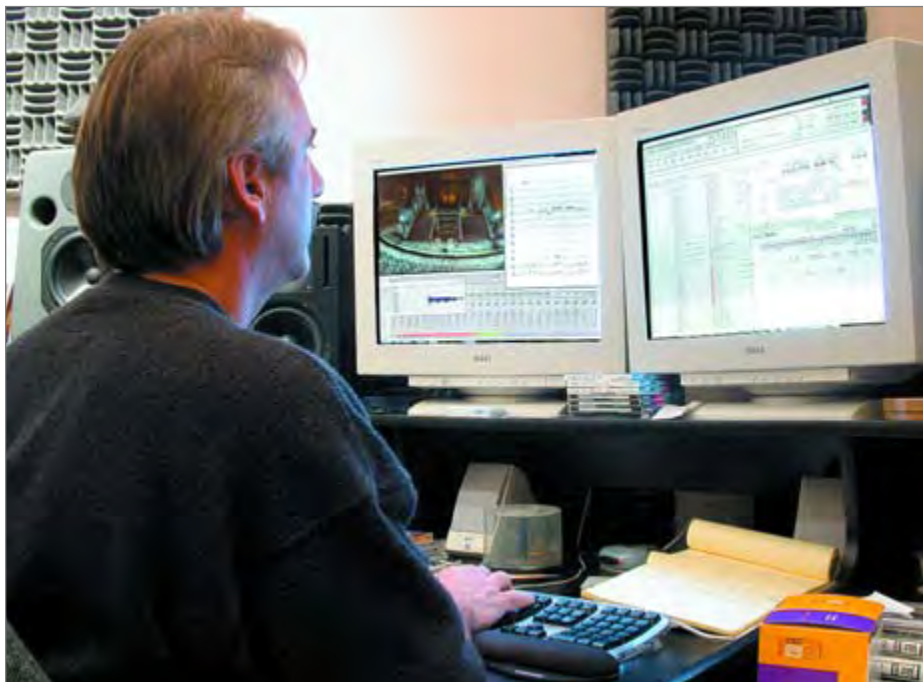
For instance, when players first enter *Uru*, they are in the middle of a desert, with a volcano in the distance. As they walk forward, an Airstream trailer comes into view in the distance. Seeing something so mundane right at the beginning of a *Myst* game is a bit of a shock, and the Southwestern guitar theme that fades in as the player approaches the trailer reinforces that juxtaposition. "I wanted to set the feel," says Tim of the guitar piece. "It is today, you're in the desert, it's not some ancient time or some parallel universe somewhere, but it's here and now, so that was the whole purpose of that piece of music."



The Southwestern guitar theme heard at the start of the game reinforces the idea that *Uru* is a departure from the other games in the *Myst* series.



BACK TO THE PRIMITIVE



"I've gone out of my way to make a lot of unique orchestrations and different palettes that you don't normally hear, using exotic instruments."

In addition to making careful decisions about where and when to insert the score into the game, Tim also had to create music that would complement the feel of *Uru*. After all, this was not a game that would have benefited from a soundtrack consisting of a couple dozen mainstream radio hits or a string of generic pulse-pounding techno beats.

For the most part, Tim's goal was to create an organic-sounding score that simultaneously reinforced the realism of the Ages and their otherworldly mystery. "There are some places where there are synth pads and so forth, but there's nothing that strikes out as being really synthy, for the most part. I think I've gone out of my way to make a lot of unique orchestrations and different palettes, and to use exotic

instruments that you don't normally hear. There's didgeridoo in there, there's a *duduk*, an Armenian flute, there strings, there's a lot of percussion ... there are flute things, there are gamelans.... It is very organic for the most part."

Some of the soundtrack was the result of lucky coincidences that occurred during its composition. "There was a group of Masai from Kenya that happened to be in Spokane for a month or two, and they were performing at various schools and churches. I heard that they were in town, so I went and listened to them and just said, 'Man, I've got to have these guys and start to record them.'

"So I brought them in here to Cyan for two days and we recorded them, and I got a lot of their chants on tape. I've since edited those and formulated music around them, or arranged music around them, and that's something that's just a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity. You don't hear that in *Doom III* or *Doom Thirty* or whatever they're on."

Just as the Ages of *Uru* tell archaeological stories of the people who lived in them, so does the score for each Age. "Here's a lost culture," says Tim. "You really don't have a clue as to what their music sounded like, because [if] there was a way for them to record it, we haven't discovered it. So you try to look back and say, well, what do these cultures have in common? They all have voice, and they all have percussion, and so that's what I sort of centered a lot of the music around—[sounds] that would definitely be available to them—and then sort of built on it from there. Hopefully, [the player will] listen and discover things in the music."

URU'S SOUND EFFECTS

While Tim focused on the score and designed the overarching sound aesthetics, *Uru*'s Sound Designer, Christopher Clanin, worked on creating and integrating each sound effect into the game. A veteran sound engineer, Chris started doing sound design professionally in 1995 as a Sound Designer at Broderbund Software, where he first met Tim Larkin. Chris moved on to a post-production studio called Earwax in San Francisco, where he started engineering sound for television advertisements. He continued to work on sound design for national TV advertisements after leaving Earwax, working for a wide range of high-profile clients that included Volkswagen, Budweiser, and Pepsi.

In 2001, Chris was looking for a change. "I was getting burned out on doing ad work, because it was a lot of pressure and crazy deadlines," he says. "It was good money, but it was kind of soulless work. I didn't have a lot of creative input, so after about two and a half or three years, I was looking to get into something a little more creatively fulfilling and relaxing. Tim called me up and told me to come up and check [Cyan] out." It took Chris almost a year and a half to finally decide that the perks of handling *Uru*'s sound design were worth relocating from Northern California's sunny Marin County to the mossy climes of eastern Washington. "But I've started to adjust now," he laughs. "It's a great place to work."

SUBTLETY AND DETAIL

One of the biggest perks of designing sound for *Uru* was the latitude he was given in terms of experimenting with various audio techniques. "We have more time to kind of finesse stuff," he says. "[Every advertising project] was so deadline driven that you had to go with tried and true, time-tested methods, and it became kind of cookie-cutter after a while. In that world, deadlines are measured in terms of hours and minutes, and here, it's weeks and months. So we can do a lot more with experimentation and designing sounds to have more subtlety and detail."

Although time wasn't such a significant factor when developing and incorporating audio into *Uru*, Chris had to learn to work around other issues, specifically the technical limitations of the Plasma engine and players' computers. "It's been kind of an uphill battle to try to get some of the people on the tech side to understand the importance of audio; everyone just wants to focus on graphics," he says. "Because that's what most people are going to be paying attention to, on a conscious level."

Unsurprisingly, as an audio engineer, Chris believes that sound can be every bit as important as a game's visuals. "When the audio isn't good, people might not know that it's bad, but they know something's wrong, or they'll be more critical of the graphics. The better the audio is, a lot of times, it can actually make people think the graphics are better than they are."

Persuading *Uru*'s technical gurus to leave room for Chris's ambitious audio designs wasn't easy. "Getting them to allocate the resources needed to make the audio system as good as it can be was a struggle, and that was my job. Tim's job is more on the creative side; my job is more on the technical side, so I work closely with the programmers to identify features that we need for the sound system, help them troubleshoot problems that arise, identify bugs and try to figure out what's going on."

Knowing that most people—game testers included—don't have a sound designer's ear, Chris not only had to create and incorporate the sound effects into *Uru*, but he also had to test his own work to make sure everything was functioning correctly. "Basically I was audio QA [quality assurance] here, because the QA department doesn't know what it's supposed to sound like. I'm really the only one who knows when stuff isn't working. When the subtlety's not there, people may not consciously notice it, but there's still enough of a difference in the quality of the overall experience that maybe people wouldn't be as impressed by the overall experience."



Christopher Clanin worked in the hectic world of TV advertising before embarking on a more creative and experimental career as *Uru*'s Sound Designer.



SCALABLE SOUND



Allowing the user to scale the number of sounds heard in *Uru* ensures that high-end PCs deliver a rich audio experience, without making the game unplayable on low-end PCs.

One of the more elegant compromises that Tim and Chris made in *Uru*'s audio was to make the audio scalable, which means that the player can decide the maximum number of "voices" (individual sounds) that the game will play simultaneously. By default, the game plays sixteen voices, but that can be lowered as far as four or raised up to twenty-four. Each sound is assigned a value that determines its priority, so the most essential sounds will always be heard, even on low-end PCs, but subtler environmental audio tracks might be cut out in the name of overall performance.

"The *Myst* games are all about the atmosphere and the ambiance, and so that's why we wanted to make the audio environment just as immersive and richly detailed as the graphics," says Chris. "But that was definitely a push, to get [the tech] guys to allow us to do that. They wanted it much more stripped down, like most other games, because audio does hit the frame rate. But if you have a good sound card, a pretty decent CPU, and a fairly fast hard drive, it runs pretty well. On [lower-end computers], it's a little chunky, but that's why we have the number of sound sliders, so you can actually turn that down if it's really adversely affecting the performance."

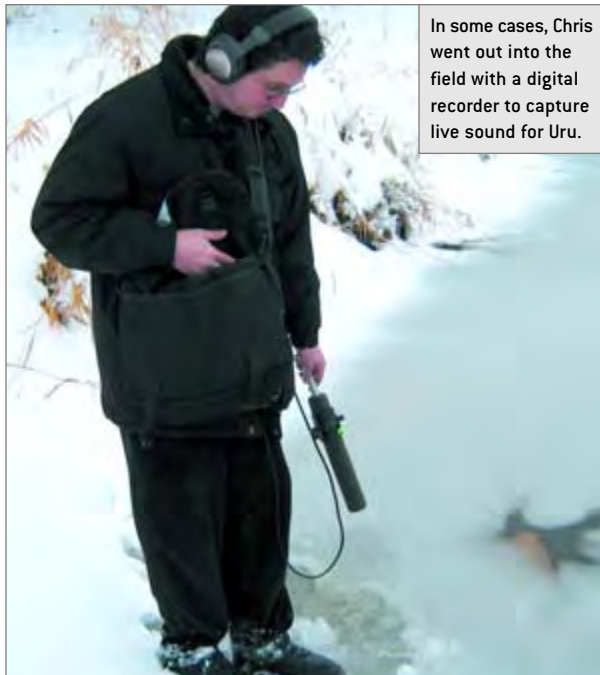
THE RIGHT TOOLS FOR THE JOB

Chris designed most of *Uru*'s sounds with Digidesign's ProTools on the Macintosh. The raw source material for the sounds came from Cyan's sound-effects library, Chris's own proprietary library of sounds, or by using a portable data recorder to capture sounds and import them into ProTools (a process called "Foleying").



Many of the sources for *Uru*'s sound effects came from Cyan's sound-effects library or Chris's own proprietary library of sounds.

Once imported into ProTools, various processors allowed Chris to raise or lower the pitch of a sound, shorten or lengthen a sound with time compression or expansion, adjust the equalization of the sound by elevating or cutting certain frequencies—and that's just the basics. Virtually every sound in *Uru* underwent significant transformation from its original raw source. "We don't just like to pull stuff off CDs and use it," says Chris. "It's always something mixed with something else, or it's a single sound that's heavily processed in some way," although Chris notes that he tried to stay away from over-processing sounds for the most part, preferring to keep them as organic and natural as possible.



In some cases, Chris went out into the field with a digital recorder to capture live sound for *Uru*.

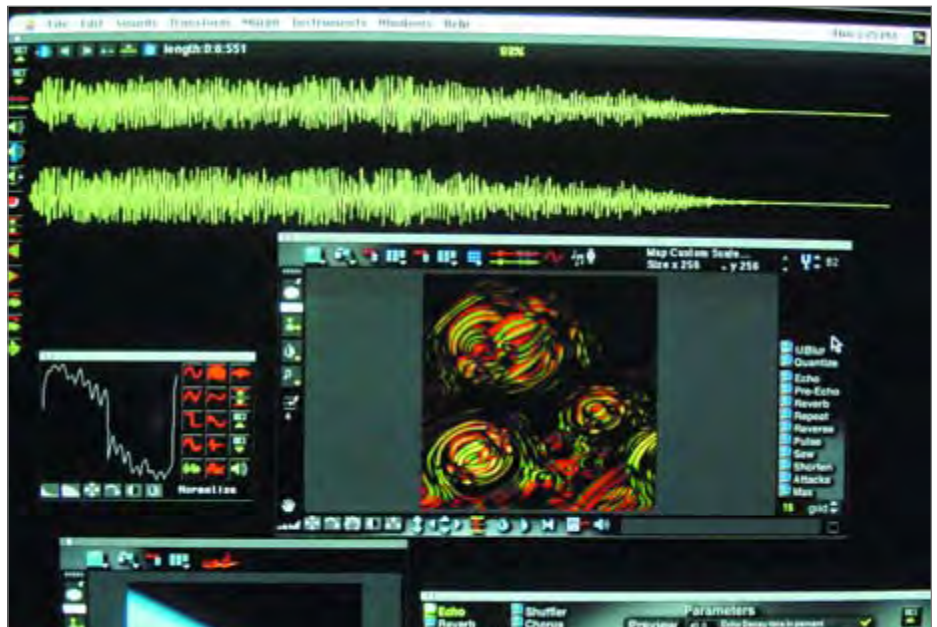
Chris approached each sound in *Uru* by trying to relate the game object that caused it with something similar in the real world. “The mechanical stuff is obvious,” he says. “If it’s a big metal device, like in the gear room in Gahreesen, then I’m going to gather together as many clinking, clanking gear-type sounds as I can and go from there.”

One of the significant exceptions to the “no heavy processing” rule were the Bahro creature sounds, as heard in the entrances of the Bahro Caves. “It wasn’t totally artificial,” says Chris, “because it was actually processed human voice, so we started with an organic source. Tim recorded me screaming for some of the special Bahro screams at the end of the game, and then processed it through this [ProTools] plug-in called PitchBlender, by Wave Mechanics, [which] allows you to modulate pitch. So that’s what you’re hearing, that sort of flutter effect.”

Another of Chris’s favorite programs is U & I Software’s MetaSynth, a program that uses Fast Fourier Transform (FFT) algorithms to change images into sound, and vice-versa. “It’s really cool. It’s pretty unique in the audio world; it’s kind of like Photoshop for sound guys.”



The sound of the gear weight in the Gahreesen gear room comes from the sound of roller coaster sprocket clanking as the coaster is going up.



Chris made good use of U & I Software's MetaSynth, which transforms images into sound and vice-versa.



BAHRO SOUNDS

Chris used MetaSynth to create the raw source for the sound of the disintegrating Bahro poles at the end of each Age, which gives that sound its otherworldly ambiance. “[It’s] pretty synthy, which is definitely a departure from 99 percent of the sound in the game,” says Chris. “I had all this kind of trippy MetaSynth stuff in there, but then it just needed something to augment it.” Since the Bahro poles disintegrate into a shower of sparks, Chris processed an electrical spark sound and added it to the mix. “I also had some whale breeches, [which] sound pretty cool when they go through the effects.”

There’s a reason for the synthesized feel of the Bahro pole sound effect, which sets it apart from most of the other sounds in *Uru*. “This is a big event in the game,” says Chris. “You’ve made it through one whole Age, so you’ve solved a quarter of the game, so we kind of wanted to make it special.”

All of the Bahro sound effects are closely related, which is an attempt to link them thematically. If you listen closely to the sound of the vanishing Bahro pole, you can hear the same sound that plays when you enter a Bahro Cave gate, which is itself a synthesis of the two sound effects used for the Journey Cloths that players touch during their adventure through the Age.

“There are two Journey Cloth sounds,” says Chris. “There’s a more subtle Journey Cloth sound, and then when you get all of the Journey Cloths, you get a different sound. So I took those two sounds, married them together, and put that on the [Bahro Cave] gate, imported that into [the Bahro pole sound], and then used that in the background to kind of tie it into the Journey Cloths and the Bahro.”

The sound of the disintegrating Bahro pole at the end of each Age is a combination of abstract MetaSynth sound, electrical sparks, and processed whale breeches.

The sound effect used for the Journey Cloths is also heard when you enter a Bahro Cave or cause a Bahro pole to disappear.



SOUND INTEGRATION—“THE HARD PART”

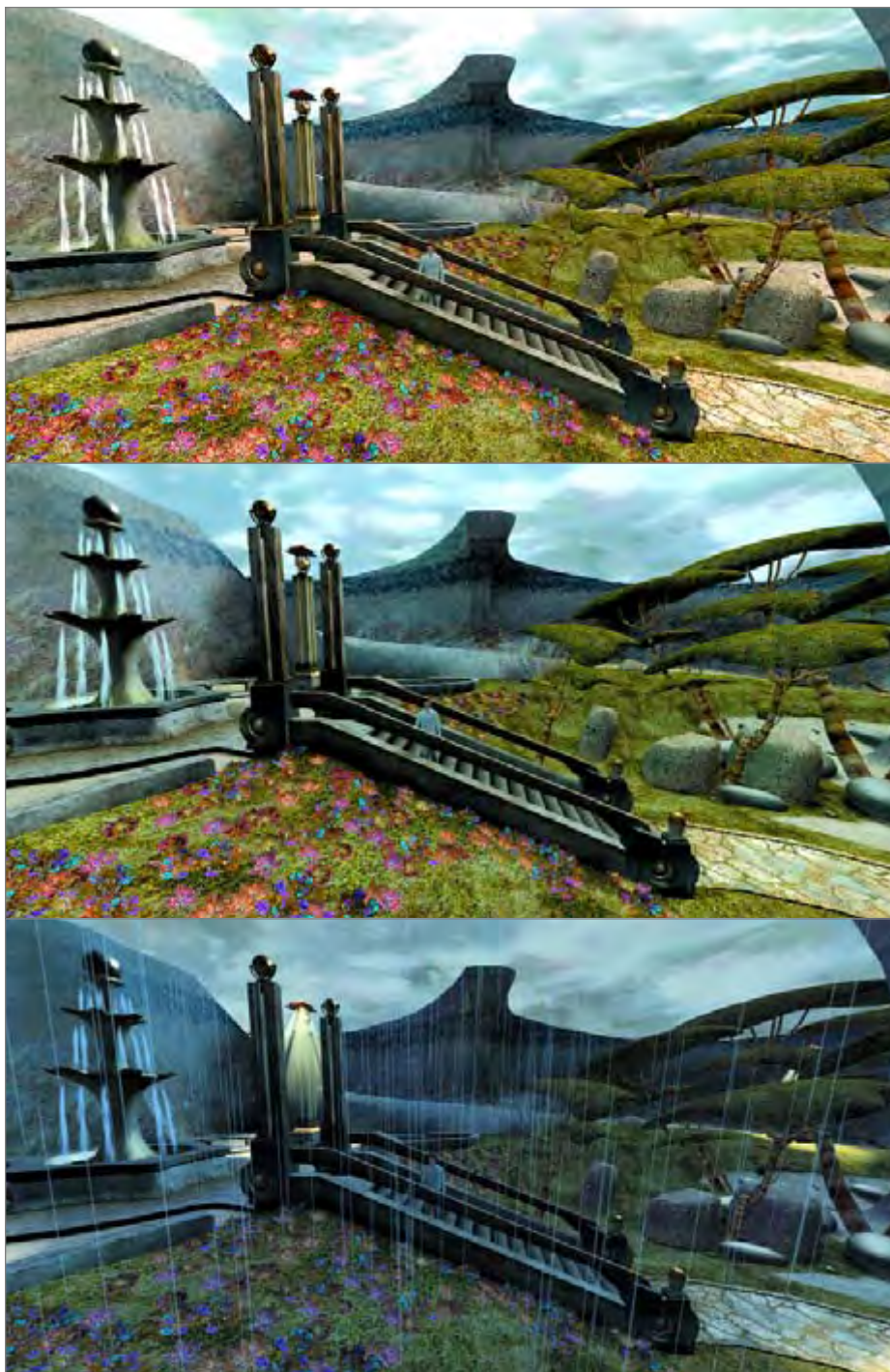
Once he had created *Uru*'s sound effects, Chris's job was only half done. “The easy part was actually making sounds,” he says. “The hard part was integrating sounds into the game.”



Creating *Uru*'s sound effects was only half the battle—or less. “The easy part was actually making sounds. The hard part was integrating sounds into the game.”

Just as the 3D artists used 3D Studio Max to create wire-frame models of the Ages and overlay textures, collision zones, and cameras in them, Chris used Max to insert sound emitters—essentially virtual speakers—into the Ages to tell the game when, where, and how to play each sound. It wasn't an easy job. “I'd never used Max before, and the Max plug-ins that we're using are all proprietary, so even if I had used Max, I'd still have had to learn the idiosyncrasies of the Plasma engine,” he says. “There's no real-world analogue to any recording studio hardware.”

Not only did Chris need to define which sounds would be heard in which regions, but he also had to determine how those sounds would change as the player moved around the Age. For example, he would have to assign a particular footstep sound to each type of terrain in the Age, but he'd also have to make sure that a special type of reverb was added to it if the player was to walk into a cave. And that was one of his easier tasks. “I had to basically teach myself Max, and [learn] how to create these geometric shapes that help the audio blend and mesh into the environment, so that sounds aren't cutting off when you get beyond a certain range and there are smooth transitions between different environments within a given Age,” he says.



"For example, in [Eder] Kemo, there are these sort of organically shaped pathways that are meandering through grass and dirt and boulders in the middle of all that. There's a lot of stuff going on in there. Even though there aren't that many sounds that are being used, it was actually pretty complicated. In this small area, you wouldn't think there was that much going on, but it was actually pretty complicated."

Chris was also at the mercy of the constantly evolving Plasma engine: "When I first got here, the engine was really in its infancy," he remembers. "A lot of it didn't work. A lot of stuff was really buggy. [The tech guys] basically rewrote major chunks of the sound system three times, because it just wasn't working well. [Sounds] would get stuck in a loop; there were all kinds of glitching and stuff. So actually, it wasn't until the last six months of development that I really had all the tools in place and the engine was running well enough to actually do my job efficiently."

Eder Kemo's deceptively complex terrain made for some tricky audio challenges, especially when the changing weather is factored in.

STEREIZERS

And to make the audio even more realistic (and complicated), Chris requested that several proprietary sound features be added to the Plasma engine, the most revolutionary of which is called a “stereizer.” Conceived by Chris and implemented by a former Cyan programmer named Mark Finch, the “stereizer” animates the sound emitters in the Ages to create sound that retains a 3D feel no matter where the player moves.

“Normally, 3D sounds are mono, but we can take a stereo sound and attach it to two emitters, left and right, and position it in 3D space,” says Chris. “That in and of itself isn’t unique, but what’s unique about our engine is that we have this feature that takes the left and right emitters and—when you’re inside a given area—attaches them to your head, so it seems to surround you.

“As you rotate around, they stay attached to your head and it maintains the stereo image. But once you get outside of the defined distance, say, fifty feet, then they start to pull away from your head and come out at a specified angle that corresponds to the size of the area. If you walk around that area, then the speakers will track like that, so it’s great for area effects.”

Chris uses the “brain pod” trees in Eder Kemo to demonstrate. “For example, there are randomized whistling and creaking stereo sounds associated with those. So when you’re away from them, you want the stereo sound to sound like it’s coming from over there. When you face them, you still get the stereo image, but it’s not super wide; it’s actually confined to the area. As you approach it, then the stereo image gets wider and wider, and then once you’re inside [the grove of trees], as you turn around, then the speakers track you. If they were static, then as you turned around, they wouldn’t track your orientation; you’d hear the sounds collapsing into mono as you turned around.”

THINGS CHANGE

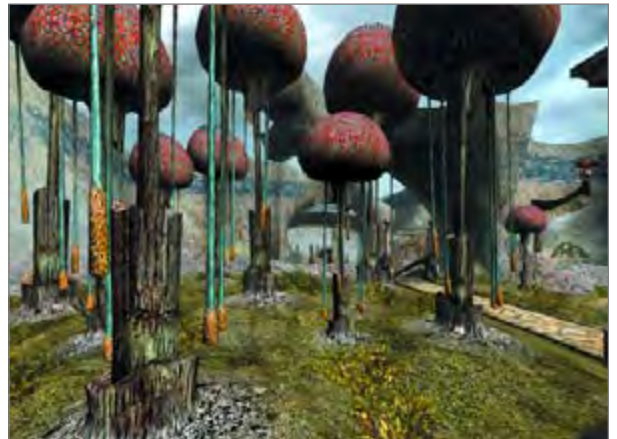
Tim acknowledges that many gamers won’t pick up on the complexities of *Uru*’s revolutionary audio design, but for him, that’s not the point. “Maybe most people wouldn’t even notice it,” he says, “but it’s that kind of subtlety that I think makes this game stand apart. There’s nothing worse to me than listening to a game and hearing strictly 2D sound that doesn’t move, that’s stagnant, sterile, just sitting right there. If you go back now and listen to *Riven*, although it’s in stereo and the sounds do that to a certain degree, it’s definitely not to the degree that we have now.

“When I first came here four years ago, there was a list of features that felt important to me. The aesthetic that I’ve tried to set up from the beginning [of *Uru*] is just an environment that’s real. It was really important to me to have a lot of subtlety in the environments, and to have a lot of the environments be dynamic. We’ve got multiple sounds coming from multiple locations, and they’re constantly updating all the time as you move.

“Things change. You go into places and they sound different. When you walk out of a room, you may not be totally aware of it, but you’re going to hear something different; even though it may be the same source, you’re going to hear it in a different way. So, it’s how the environments treat the sounds—the same sound, [heard] from different environments—that makes a world of difference.”



Chris points out the complex arrangement of audio emitters at the entrance of Eder Kemo's Bahro Cave.



To experience the effect of *Uru*’s proprietary stereizer audio emitters, walk toward the “brain trees” in Eder Kemo to hear the sounds of the trees in stereo. Walk into the grove and spin around, and you’ll hear that the audio emitters track your orientation.

CHAPTER 21

POD



BEYOND URU

LOOKING BACK

On February 4, 2004, not quite three months after the release of *Uru*, Rand Miller broke the news of *Uru Live*'s demise in an open letter to the *Uru* community on www.cyanworlds.com:

Uru Live fans and friends,

Thank you so much for your continued support of the worlds that are *Myst* and *Uru*. It has truly been wonderful immersing ourselves along with you in the ongoing adventure, following your comments—good and bad—as you explored *Uru Live*.

I have some good news and some bad news.

First, the bad news ...

Uru Live is being put to bed.

Even with all of the time, money, resources, code, people, sweat, and heart that were poured into *Uru Live*, we needed a certain number of subscribers to pay the bills. We didn't get there. *Uru Live* is innovative and unique; its online universe is one of the most beautiful and complex ever built, anywhere. The idea of ongoing content was dramatic and forward-looking, but it required a substantial continuing effort to sustain. We were just not able to sign up the number of subscribers (even for free) necessary to pay for that effort.

Now for the good news ...

The soul of *Uru Live* will live larger.

The soul of *Uru Live* came in two parts: the community and the content. Both will live on. Nothing can kill the community—it has a life of its own. The call and the gathering of the community will continue. And the content—what can I say? We have it, large amounts of it, ready to expand the world of *Uru*. In the past weeks we've been hard at work packaging that content in a different, more inclusive form—expansion packs—the first of which will be available in a month or two. Even better, the first expansion pack, *To D'ni*, is free. And there's more good news on inclusivity. I'm pleased to officially announce that the Mac version of *Uru* is finally under way.

It would be easy to focus on the negative aspects of this announcement. But we've grieved our loss, and with clearer minds we see things in a different light. The fact is that the continuing *Uru* adventure is amazing. The story and places it reaches are spectacular. And in the long run, we want as many people as possible to experience and explore these new worlds. The closing of *Uru Live* actually gives us the opportunity to open these expanding worlds to a larger audience, including those people without broadband. Only a small portion of the people who played *Uru* ever made it to D'ni in *Uru Live*. Now everyone can get to D'ni—and beyond.

Again, perhaps the ending has not yet been written.

Shorah,

Rand and the Cyan Worlds Team



A group of *Uru Live* beta testers gather in Gahreesen during *Uru Live*'s too-brief existence.

Despite the fact that *Uru Live* never quite made it out of its beta stage, Rand Miller recalls how close they came to launching one of the most ambitious massively multiplayer concepts ever seen: "We had taken *Uru* close to a deliverable state with roughly 30,000 explorers. The biggest technical issue when *Uru* was cancelled was one of scaling. When you consider the very high-res interactive environment we created, there was a certain amount of time required for tuning and optimization. We were making substantial progress but needed more time. "*Uru* did turn out as planned. It just needed more time to mature."

But time would prove to be *Uru Live*'s enemy. "*Live* required both the technological expertise, game-design skills, and the financial resources to see it through. Looking back, we really did produce a remarkable product that unfortunately few had the opportunity to see. In the end, *Uru* was done in because the funding ran out."

In fact, in an ideal world, the only thing that Rand would have done differently is allow *Uru Live* more time to get up and running. "With another six to nine months on our schedule, *Uru* would have had time to mature," says Rand. "That would have allowed us a true measure of its potential."

LOOKING FORWARD

Although *Uru Live* ultimately proved to be a commercially unviable experiment, Rand believes that many of its ideas will wind up being implemented in other online games. “The idea of constantly changing content is still the most exciting thing,” he says. “We still feel like that idea is a key component in online entertainment becoming more mainstream.”



An image of the as-yet-unreleased Kahlo Age, proof that there is life beyond *Uru Live*.

And while armchair quarterbacks might complain that Cyan fumbled the ball, Rand points to *Uru Live*'s many unsung successes: “Technology advances, community building, design processes, production flexibility ... I could go on. We successfully shifted Cyan's internal development process to something we had not been before. But beyond that, we created what we had set out to do (albeit for a short period), which is create a continuous, online, interactive, growing environment that truly became an alternative to the typical mainstream entertainment.

“The community created with *Live* was like none we've seen before. Games are great ... to an extent, but when you can create a living, breathing world that blurs the line between virtual and [reality], it's a remarkable achievement. That was a unique aspect of *Uru Live*, and it was realized every day by those who were able to take part.”



Concept art of a device from the unreleased Age of Negilahn
[art by Stephan Martiniere].

And the true silver lining is that the vast majority of the Ages and stories created for *Uru Live* will see the light of day, in one form or another. “We intend to continue the story through additional releases both as the game [and] with additional novels,” says Rand. “With the assets created for *Live*, we are able to at least get into the public’s hands elements that we believe further enhance the backbone of D’ni—the people, places, and events that not only shaped their lives, but that had such an impact on those who visited it through the *Myst* series.”

The true story of the making of *Uru* is the story of the ten-year evolution of a concept first imagined by a handful of dedicated visionaries working from their basements. *Myst*, *Uru*, and *Cyan* have long passed the point at which they have anything left to prove to themselves or to the gaming public. But they have never measured their own success in terms of sales figures or industry awards. Their ultimate goal has always been to create living worlds and keep them alive by telling the stories behind them. And fortunately for the *Uru* faithful, it’s a task with no end in sight. *Uru*’s future will always remain unwritten.



Cyan continues to look toward *Uru*’s future.

